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Christian agencies divided over redeeming slaves in Sudan

Alan Doerksen

LONDON, Ont. — Slavery is still alive and well in Sudan, and many Sudanese Christians are suffering and dying as a result. But two Christian agencies in Canada are divided over whether or not they should help to free slaves by redeeming them with money.

Christian Solidarity International (CSI) is a Christian human rights organization which has worked since 1995 to free more than 11,000 slaves in Sudan, explains Glen Pearson, a London, Ontario-based worker with CSI's Slave Redemption Project. Last May, Pearson and co-worker Jane Roy, also of London, Ont., went on a CSI mission to Sudan and freed 800 slaves, using \$60,000 they had raised.

In early 2000, Pearson and Roy plan to return to Sudan on another slave-freeing mission. "We'll be taking more money that Canadians have donated for freeing slaves," explains Pearson. "I suspect we'll get more [money] because people are more aware of the issues."

CSI's anti-slavery campaign has four parts: purchasing freedom for slaves, providing food and medicine to communities, promoting the peace process, and public education.

The Sudanese government refuses to acknowledge the existence of slavery, says Pearson. But, he adds, "Nobody's really believing the Sudanese government anymore."

Fortunately, the Canadian and American governments are starting to pay attention to the slavery problem, according to Pearson. The U.S. Congress recently voted

440 to zero on a motion condemning the human rights practices and slave trade in Sudan, he reports.

And in one unusual turn of events, an American Senator recently met the producer of the CBS TV show *Touched by an Angel*, and suggested she produce an episode dealing with the Sudanese slave trade (see related story, p. 7).

No proof for criticisms

Last April, Pearson and Roy met with Canada's external affairs minister Lloyd Axworthy, and they plan to meet him again in late October. The Canadian government has "asked us to keep them appraised" of the slavery situation in Sudan, explains Pearson.

In order to work in southern Sudan, where the slave-trade is flourishing, Pearson and his colleagues have to fly in illegally. "The government of Sudan does not let us fly in," says Pearson. Although the Canadian government does not wish to violate this ban, it appreciates receiving information from CSI about the situation in Sudan, he reports.

Some Christian groups, including the Primate's World Relief and Development Fund of Canada's Anglican Church, have criticized CSI for its policy of buying the freedom of slaves, suggesting that this policy has increased the slave trade in Sudan, and inflated the price of slaves. But Pearson asserts, "There have been over 50 news groups [in Sudan] looking for that proof, and they have never found it." In fact, he says, "The slave trade went down last year.... The number of slaves this year

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OCT 21 1999



Arab slave retrievers in Sudan. Their faces are covered because they would be in danger of death if their identity becomes known.

Truth and Reconciliation commissioner gives North Americans a glimpse into South Africa

Agnes Kramer-Hamstra

TORONTO — "There is no future without forgiveness." It was achieving forgiveness which led South African Anglican Archbishop Desmond Tutu to agree to be the chair of South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC). The commission is now wrapping up its two years of hearings during which it investigated human rights violations under the apartheid regime in South Africa between 1960 and 1994.

On Tuesday, September 21, Rehoboth Fellowship Christian Reformed Church in Toronto hosted commission member Dr. Piet Meiring, who represented the Dutch Reformed Church on the TRC. During the previous week Meiring spoke at Calvin College in Grand Rapids, Michigan, at Redeemer College in Ancaster, Ontario, and also spoke at the Institute

for Christian Studies in Toronto — all Reformed institutions which have had more than a passing interest in seeing justice done in South Africa.

Exposing the rotting wounds

"How glorious was the day Nelson Mandela emerged from his 27 years of political imprisonment on Robyn Island," Meiring said. "We all wondered what he would look like. And there he came, not with his fist in the air, but looking like a grandfather, his arms open. It was a miracle that this man did not come seeking vengeance."

Meiring went on to tell of the heady days of the turnover from the repressive apartheid regime to a country led by the democratically elected Mandela. "But then we had to decide what to do with the brutal injustices of our past,"

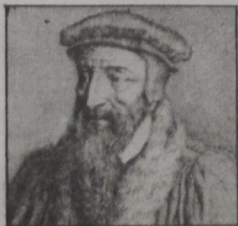


Dr. Piet Meiring

Meiring said. "Do we hold Nuremberg-type trials?" The people decided not: the enormous cost and the immediacy of South Africa's need to begin restorative justice pointed away from such trials.

Yet the leaders did not want to naively pretend the past had not
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Theme:
Our Reformed Heritage:
Is it still relevant?
Pp. 4, 12-16



John Calvin

News

Buying freedom of slaves won't inflate price



Sudanese slaves wait to be redeemed.

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has gone down."

The price of slaves in Sudan has not been rising in the past few years, insists Pearson. "From the beginning, we paid \$75 (Cdn) per slave." But, he notes, other agencies paid as much as \$100 (US) per slave, which "caused a fair bit of difficulty.... But their intentions were good."

Other Christian agencies have been involved with redeeming

slaves in Sudan before, but not anymore, says Pearson. "The Sudanese community wanted to work only with CSI," he explains.

Anglican leaders oppose slave redemption

Last July, the Primate's World Relief and Development Fund (PWRDF) adopted a policy that opposes the practice of slave redemption in Sudan. A bulletin sent to Anglican churches in September

spelled out PWRDF's views on this issue: "After much reflection, PWRDF discourages Anglican parishes from being involved in slave redemption campaigns. The PWRDF National Committee believes that participating in the buying of human beings contradicts our faith in the Incarnation and the belief that all persons are created in the image of God. The Jubilee call to 'free the captives' is a call to restore right relations among all people. This cannot happen through participating in a system where human beings are bought and sold."

"In fact, research in the Sudan has shown that the slave redemption programs have raised the price of slaves, thereby aggravating the problem by creating another market for slaves. Indeed, one former slave redeemer has said 'We've made slavery more profitable than narcotics.'"

Instead, PWRDF suggests that concerned Christians pray for the people of Sudan, and write to MPs calling on the Canadian government to work effectively toward peace in Sudan through a group called Inter-Governmental Authority in Development, of which Canada already is a part. Through ongoing grants, PWRDF is supporting peace and reconciliation

initiatives that are undertaken by the Sudanese Councils of Churches and women's organizations.

Pearson and Roy are critical of PWRDF's position on Sudan. They expressed these concerns in an opinion piece published in the Sept. 28 *London Free Press*, which stated in part: "By stating that the price of redeeming slaves had risen markedly, the PWRDF failed to inform its member churches that the price of \$75 (Cdn) per slave has been fixed for five years and has not risen in that time. Nor did it choose to inform its readers that slave raids actually declined in the past year."

"Every community leader in northern Bahr El Ghazal (the region most affected by slave raids in southern Sudan) signed a joint letter asking for Westerners to commit to slave redemption efforts which were established by Arab/Dinka peace accords years ago. Two Sudanese leaders of the Anglican Church - Reverend Joseph Beck Chol and Reverend Joseph Ayok - have supported slave redemption programs from the beginning."

"But it was more precisely in the realm of ethics and theology that the PWRDF put itself in a precarious position. The Anglican creed reminds its adherents that Christ took the initiative to 'redeem' his people trapped in slavery and sin. By his own sacrificial death he 'bought' freedom and liberty for us all. Anglicans celebrate this reality every Sunday. Yet the PWRDF would ask that Anglicans deny a similar process to enslaved Sudanese on 'theological' grounds."

"The PWRDF was surely correct when it stated that only a workable peace is the ultimate solution for the problem of slavery in Sudan.... An effective way to force

the northern Sudanese government to mend its ways is to tell the story of those slaves recently released and document their sufferings. At present, this more than anything else has brought world pressure to bear on the injustices in Sudan. It might be that slave redemption programs could have their own vital role to play in paving the way to any kind of lasting peace."

Pearson sent *Christian Courier* a statement of support for CSI's slave redemption program from Rev. Joseph Ayok-Loewenberg, a pastor from southern Sudan now living and working in Bridport, England.

'Shocked and dismayed'

"I was born into civil war and have lived through and witnessed the sufferings of my people," writes Ayok-Loewenberg. In his letter, he states how he was "shocked and dismayed" to learn of PWRDF's decision not to support CSI's slavery redemption work. "May I say that my wife and I have both seen the wonderful work CSI is doing in southern Sudan, not only in slave redemption, but also in resettlement and other practical aid to the people.... Can you think of the inexpressible joy of the restoration of the loved one to his or her family? That is the work of CSI, and I have seen it happening."

"To suggest that the work of slavery redemption merely serves to perpetuate slave trading is a misguided concept. The market for slavery exists and has always existed for many reasons, and will continue to do so.... One of the practical benefits of CSI's activities is that acknowledgement of slavery's existence today has been forced into the public arena and is now being debated.... The withdrawal of such help would be a further cruel blow to my people."

Canadian evangelicals call for action in Sudan

Alan Doerksen

OTTAWA - The Evangelical Fellowship of Canada, which represents 1.2 million Canadians, has issued an urgent call to action on Sudan. More people have died in Sudan in this conflict than in Rwanda, Bosnia and Kosovo combined, according to an EFC press release.

"It is time that Canada took the strongest action possible to bring an end to this conflict," says Janet Epp Buckingham, director of the EFC's Religious Liberty Commission (RLC), based in Ottawa.

The RLC has written a strongly worded letter to Canadian oil company Talisman Energy Inc. of Calgary asking it to end its investment in Sudan.

The Anglican Church of Canada's Primate's World Relief and Development Fund (PWRDF) is also critical of the work of Talisman in Sudan. On its website, the agency states: "Talisman is part of an oil consortium that has helped the National Islamic Front government of Sudan to develop the country's oil reserves. PWRDF

concerns are based on the fact that oil revenues would be used to perpetuate human suffering in Sudan, and that a credible Canadian presence in Sudan could be misused by the Sudanese government to bolster its image in the international community."

Systematic abuse

The EFC's Religious Liberty Commission has also written to the Minister of Foreign Affairs asking him to take all possible domestic and international mechanisms to end the conflict in Sudan. The commission is urging all EFC members to take similar action by writing letters to their elected representatives.

Leading Western political figures are increasingly calling the situation in Sudan "genocide," states Buckingham. Human rights abuses have recently been documented again in an exhaustive study by the U.S. Committee on Refugees. That study shows that civil war and famine in Sudan has displaced some four million persons and has resulted in the deaths

of over 1.9 million people since 1983.

The ruling National Islamic Front, while not alone in its complicity in this human-made tragedy, is responsible for systematic abuses of human rights. It is using starvation as a weapon resulting in the deaths of hundreds of thousands; it frequently bombs hospitals and churches in the South, the East and in the Nuba Mountains; it massacres civilian populations; it forcibly converts people in its so-called peace camps; and it supports the practice of slavery by its militias, reports Buckingham.

She states that these activities have been carefully documented and reported by U.N. Special Rapporteurs, the U.S. State Department, human rights organizations, journalists from Europe and North America and by Christian humanitarian groups, including the Vatican. North American Christian organizations alone have hundreds of people working in the Sudan who report daily on these matters, she writes.



Jane Roy and Glen Pearson, of CSI, listen to community leaders speak in Bahrel Ghazal, Sudan.

News

Commission seeks reconciliation between victims, perpetrators

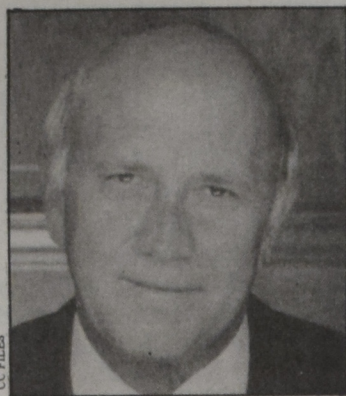
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happened, bringing more suffering, as occurred in Zambia and Namibia after their liberation. So, following the example of Chile, and East and West Germany, South Africa chose a "truth commission." "The TRC, what it is doing, is tearing the bandages off of the wounds that have rotted. So we needed to clean those wounds," a black South African woman noted.

To begin, three committees were formed. While the committee of human rights violations established the identity of victims and perpetrators, and the details of all gross violations, the reparation and rehabilitation committee helped the victims come forward. Victims were encouraged and helped in the preparation of their testimony, and their needs were established. The amnesty committee made decisions about applications for amnesty that it received from perpetrators.

Finally heard

Since 3.5 million South Africans were dispossessed during the rule of apartheid, the human rights violations committee was forced to define "gross violations." This committee travelled extensively, hearing testimony from victims of rape, of extreme torture that left permanent physical, emotional and mental scars, and of families of the



The TRC experienced great disappointment with former president F.W. de Klerk's refusal to admit that he knew of the abuses under apartheid.

murdered; 21,400 testimonies were heard.

For most blacks, the process the TRC began has been a success: they have been invited by the highest judiciary in the country to tell the truth. "Yell and scream all you like," torturers taunted one victim, "no one will ever hear you." "They were wrong," said that witness, "for now I am being heard."

"Was it worthwhile?" Meiring approached another witness with this question. This woman had travelled miles to stand before the commission, and still had on her cheeks the tear stains from telling her painful story. "Her face

became radiant," Meiring said. She told the commission: "Now perhaps I can sleep at night; after 16 years, perhaps I will be able to sleep through the night, for my voice has been heard."

As she spoke of losing her 13-year-old son one night, and then finally being sent a letter to pick him up at a certain address; as she spoke of her anticipation, and then of finding that the address was a morgue; as she spoke of the wounds on the back of her boy's head from being dragged by his feet from a truck, and the bullet holes and burn marks on his torso, Archbishop Tutu put his head down on the table and sobbed.

"The tears that were spilled as people witnessed to the truth, those were tears ... like the balm of Gilead," Meiring said.

White response mixed

While the majority of black South Africans view the work of the TRC as a success, the response from white South Africa has been mixed. Meiring spoke of how difficult it was for white South Africa to be confronted with itself, to "stand and to look into the mirror."

He compared this with what Elizabeth Kubler-Ross has uncovered in her studies of peoples' response to shocking revelations and to grief: there is denial ("I never knew"); "This can't happen";

there is bargaining ("It can't be as bad as they say"; "If only I can have her back I'll..."); and then anger and finally acceptance – but they aren't at the "acceptance"/reconciliation stage yet.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission was greatly disappointed by both former president F.W. de Klerk's refusal to admit that he knew of the abuses under apartheid as well as P.W. Botha's absolute refusal to recognize the TRC. Perpetrators were invited to come and apply to the Amnesty Committee. If they gave a full disclosure of what they had done, they were given amnesty. If they refused the invitation, they were subpoenaed. The commission interviewed 7,048 perpetrators. "The truth can be uncovered, can be encouraged, and can be acknowledged," said Meiring, "but reconciliation is a gift."

Reconciliation a ministry

Meiring reflected that reconciliation takes time, is a weaving of fragile strands of truth, justice, forgiveness, restitution, reform. While some lawyers working for the commission defined reconciliation as the end of street fighting, Archbishop Tutu cited 2nd Corinthians 5:11 ff. as the way of reconciliation: *All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and has given us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting the message of reconciliation to us.... We entreat you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.*

When asked during a question period if perpetrators and those they had sinned against were ever in the same room together, Meiring related a story which illustrates the power of Christ's presence and

which was at the heart of the vision and work of the TRC.

In a remote community, the apartheid regime had appointed a black mayor. One night, two hot-heads picked up the mayor and began to beat him. They then realized that if they let him go, they would be headed for prison. So they killed him. Nevertheless, they were caught, sentenced to death, then to life imprisonment, and finally were given amnesty as the new government came into power.

The TRC travelled to their village to hear their testimony. For several days the two men and their village told of how this mayor had miscarried justice among them. On the last day of the hearing, a young black man walked up to the presiding judge and they had a whispered conversation. The judge then looked around the room, smiled, and said, "What this man has asked me is so out of order I will allow him to speak!"

"I am the son of the man you have murdered," the young man began. "When I was growing up in this village I never knew why my family was not accepted. Now I understand. And I am standing here for my family to say that we now understand and we ask your forgiveness for what my father did. We understand why you murdered my father, and we forgive you."

In closing, Dr. Meiring asked his audience to pray that the government will act quickly on the recommendations of the TRC, and that the churches of South Africa will take bold initiatives to further the work of reconciliation. He asked especially for prayers that the eyes and hearts of the perpetrators be opened.

More information on the work and the final report of the TRC can be found at their website: <http://www.truth.org.za>

Christian Courier will examine CRWRC's Central American development work

CC Staff

ST. CATHARINES, Ont. – The Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) has awarded funds to *Christian Courier* and the Christian Reformed World Relief Committee (CRWRC) for a project called "Spare Change or Real Change?"

The project will involve CC managing editor Marian Van Til traveling for three weeks to four Central and South American countries to examine and report on the development work being carried on by CRWRC and its indigenous partners in those countries. The four countries Van Til will visit are Haiti, El Salvador, Honduras and Ecuador.

She will interact with both North American and native CRWRC staffers, examining the co-operation and partnerships CRWRC has with other development agencies (both indigenous and North American), and looking at CIDA's development role as

well. After her return, Van Til will initiate a four-part series in CC (one per country visited), slated to begin in CC's December 13 Christmas issue. The articles will include a look at the economic and cultural aspects of development, as well as the effectiveness of the particular work CRWRC is doing.

Not propaganda

Both *Christian Courier* and CRWRC stress that Van Til is "going as a journalist, not under CRWRC's advertising budget." CIDA has recently offered similar grants to other writers and development agencies, hoping to give Canadians in general a more accurate picture of what such development is about (and perhaps a better idea of where and how some of their tax dollars are spent).

By the time readers receive the current issue of CC, Marian will have spent four days in Haiti and will be in El Salvador. She'll be back in the CC office on Friday,

October 29.

She comments: "Readers may remember that I wrote about an unusual trip my husband, Ed, and I took to El Salvador this year in February, when we were guests of the American ambassador and her husband, who are friends of ours. Little did I dream that I'd be back in that country within such a short time. Needless to say, the circumstances are different this time!"

She concludes, "It's a long time to be out of the office right now, but this is a great opportunity. Everybody says CRWRC is especially close to the hearts of Canadian CRC people; and it's true. I'm hoping I can give our readers, whether Christian Reformed or not, a good, objective picture of the kind of work being carried on to help the poor help themselves in those countries – and a bit of a glimpse of the countries and their people."



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Editorial

What does it mean to be Reformed? *A view from Russia*

Adrian Helleman

What does it mean to be Reformed? On the threshold of the third millennium, does this still-asked ecclesiastical question have any meaning? Can "Reformed" be used when it has strongly negative connotations, as it does in Russia? Is a Reformed worldview relevant here?

The streets of Moscow are as good place as any to ask these questions. If the term "Reformed" has no relevance in Russia, those of us who wear it as a proud badge, whether in Halifax, Grand Rapids, Vancouver, or points in between, might ponder whether we should remove it, or at least ask ourselves what it also means in North America.

What does it mean to be Reformed? For me, what is distinctive about the Reformed tradition is its emphasis on the Lordship of Christ; or to use John Calvin's expression: "God reigns." My own teaching is shaped by this tradition, yet in Russia I never use the term "Reformed" in the classroom. My motivation in that is neither fear nor shame; it is a realization that the term, as such, is largely meaningless for my students.

The task of teaching in Russia from the perspective of a Reformed worldview is formidable for two reasons. The first is historical: if the Reformation made any impact in Russia, it was in a distorted fashion. "Reformed" as an ecclesiastical term marks a branch of the Christian faith, one that traces its roots primarily

back to John Calvin. Calvinism hardly touched Russia, and most Russians know very little about it. The Reformed Church here is so tiny that it is statistically irrelevant.

The Russian Orthodox Church dominates the religious scene in the same way that the new and imposing Cathedral of Christ the Savior vies with the Kremlin for attention in Moscow. The Orthodox Church claims the allegiance of 80 per cent of the population; even though there is little empirical evidence for this. There are also sizeable Baptist and Pentecostal groups, but they are not Reformed by any stretch of the imagination, anymore than the Orthodox Church is.

If people do know anything about Calvin, they associate him with the doctrines of predestination and the perseverance of the saints. Most Russian Christians reject the latter, which they call the doctrine of assured salvation, since they claim that it allows believers to live as they please. Only with the recent publication in Russian of Calvin's *Institutes of the Christian Religion* do they now have the opportunity to read Calvin for themselves rather than filtered through the distorted portrayals of his thought that are available here.

Postmodernism wants no competition

The second reason teaching from a Reformed worldview is difficult reveals an even more serious obstacle: the Reformed worldview is under severe attack everywhere in the world. The attack is led not so much by other ecclesiastical traditions or other religions, but by postmodernism. Indeed, every tradition and religion which does not conform to the tenets of postmodernism is under attack today. As a new worldview that does not tolerate other worldviews, postmodernism uses the power of the courts, the media and educational institutions to force its agenda on the world. Recently, it has made huge inroads in Russia.

When asked in an interview by the *New York Times* about the attraction of postmodernism, the new dean of the philosophy faculty at Moscow State University, Vladimir Mironov, responded by asking: "What day of the week is it?" Fortunately, there are other competing philosophies. Since *perestroika* there has been a resurgence of interest in Russian religious philosophy, such as that of Vladimir Solovyov; this may help limit the influence of postmodernism here. Solovyov (1863-1900), a younger contemporary of Abraham Kuyper, wanted to integrate faith, philosophy and science.

An active confession

In order to respond to postmodernism adequately, we who are Reformed need to rediscover what it means to be Reformed; we must go back to our roots and listen once again to Calvin. The God who reigns over the creation forms the core of Calvin's theology. Calvin himself uses the active form, "God reigns," rather than the static phrase, "the sovereignty of God," with which most of us are familiar.

God actively seeks out those who are lost because of sin and saves them for service in his heavenly kingdom. Calvin's language is a far cry from the static God of Reformed scholasticism or the sterile confessionalism that is exemplified in the mnemonic TULIP. It was this "active" aspect of Calvin's thought that was developed further by Abraham Kuyper and Herman Dooyeweerd. Although we may critique all these men, we must not lose sight of what their goal was: to claim the whole world in the name of Christ.

We who are Reformed must not neglect our roots or we will lose our vision and risk the danger of being swept away by the postmodernist flood. The Orthodox Churches in Russia show us how a tradition can survive in the face of adversity. While many mistakes were made, and more than a few church leaders compromised themselves with the Soviet State, the Russian Church survived by the grace of God. The traditionalism of the Orthodox Church, with its 4th century liturgy and its claim of continuity with the church fathers, helped it to survive. In times of persecution, its weakness has also been its strength.

Can the Reformed worldview become relevant in Russia today? My answer is an unequivocal Yes. The theme "God reigns" is well known to the Orthodox, who in their churches portray Christ as the victorious ruler of the entire creation. Unfortunately, their understanding of the *relevance* of Christ's rule in the daily lives of Christians is, I believe, inadequate. But their emphasis on Christ as the ruler of creation provides a useful point of contact with them for Reformed Christians.

Neither "Reformed" nor "reformational" (as the latter is sometimes used in Canada) will be accepted as appropriate adjectives in Russia. "Christian" does not work either, because that term has been pre-empted by the Orthodox. "Biblical" is possible, as long as it is qualified by the article "a" – that is, "a biblical worldview." After all, the Orthodox also have a biblical worldview.

Appeal to our similarities

One useful strategy may be for us Reformed to identify with the Orthodox as much as possible, without losing our own distinctiveness. Outside of the university, for example, I have appealed to the Patristic heritage that is so strong in Orthodoxy by suggesting that John Calvin should be regarded as one of the church fathers. This is not as absurd as it may appear on the surface; for the Orthodox the tradition of the church fathers continues even into the 19th century.

Of course, the label is not as important as what is signified. There are also other keys. As I already mentioned, I teach from the perspective of a Reformed worldview. When my students are confronted with their daily dose of news about bombings, graft, money laundering and political shenanigans, they may be forgiven their feelings of despair. It is then that I remind them that there is hope for Russia, and that one day justice will be done here too.

Hope is in short supply in Russia. And there is ultimately only one source of hope in the entire universe. If God reigns over his creation, should they – or we – despair?

The relevance of a Reformed worldview in Russia cannot be determined by looking only to the past, nor is the answer to be found exclusively in the present. The answer depends, as well, on the future, a future that is not in our hands, but in the hands of our heavenly Father who reigns over his creation. That is a lesson, of course, that we need to learn anew in Canada and the U.S. as well. Our God reigns. Hallelujah!

Adrian Helleman is a visiting professor at Moscow State University. He is supported by Christian Studies International (International Institute of Christian Studies in the U.S.) and Christian Reformed World Missions.

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Letters

Let's share a glass: We're all on the same side

Please allow me to comment on Bert Hielema's October 4 column, in which Bert finds it necessary to take a swipe at Hal Lindsay. Over the last 20 years I have met many people who have become Christians as a result of reading *The Late Great Planet Earth*. Since the Bible states that "heaven will rejoice over one sinner who repents," can we at least accept that God can use anybody he likes, whether we approve or not?

At the risk of being nasty (which is not my intention, and why I will include myself in this), how many people have become Christians as a result of what Bert and I write? The cardinal point of faith is that believing that Jesus died for our sins; I am reasonably sure that nobody will gain entrance to heaven, or be denied it, based on whether he or she believes there will be a Rapture or not.

Speaking of the Rapture, Bert has an interesting line of reasoning, so much so that I am not smart enough to understand what he is saying. The way I see it is that God created a perfect world, and then created people to run it. He did not want us to be robots who are programmed to worship him, but gave us

a free choice. Unfortunately Satan was able to deceive Eve and Adam, and we have been suffering the consequences ever since. I have never read anything from any Christian writer who (whether pro or con Rapture) states that God created an imperfect world, as Bert is alleging they do.

Signs of the end?

Leaving what Hal Lindsay or (Tim LaHaye) write, (and who cares whether they make money with their books? – sorry Bert, that's a cheap shot in my opinion) Jesus himself has a few things to say (Matthew 24 and 25) about what will take place just before he returns: wars and rumors of war, famines and earthquakes. Looks like the daily newspaper, does it not? Or read what Paul has to say about the last days in 2 Timothy 3:1-5.

Am I the only one who recognizes today's society in these words? I am old enough to remember the closing days of World War II in Europe, and there was one topic just about everybody talked about all the time: the day when the Allied forces would liberate us. When was the last time

you heard a sermon about the return of Christ? Are we really looking for the liberation of this world from sin?

Whistling while he flies

I am not saying there will be a Rapture. neither am I saying there won't be. But reading 1 Thess. 4:16-17, I am at least willing to admit there could be. If there is. Bert and those who agree with him will probably have to go up kicking and screaming, while I will be whistling (my singing is lousy) "I'll Fly Away!" The point I am trying to make is: Jesus says, "The fields are white for the

harvest, and the laborers are few." While Hal and Tim are used by God to bring in the harvest, why does Bert find it necessary to swipe at them?

No hard feelings Bert, I don't know if there will be beer in heaven, but maybe we can have a chat about all this over a glass of wine (a good Cana vintage?) when we get there? In the meantime, prepare yourself to meet Hal, Tim and Jerry there, plus many Baptists, Pentecostals, Roman Catholics and others you may not agree with.

**Robert Anes,
Brantford, Ontario**

Don't forget Vreugdenhil's contribution

Thanks for a fine story on the launching of the interactive CD-ROM which supports the Grade 7 and 8 Geography curriculum from the Ontario Alliance of Christian Schools (OACS). Missing from the piece, however, was mention of Jim Vreugdenhil, director of Elementary Education at OACS.

All Alliance elementary curriculum developed over the last decade has been under Jim's direction, as is this brave new step into a future of technologically supported Christian education. Jim's "creational" vision is evident throughout.

The Christian school community across Ontario should not take Alliance Christian

teaching and learning resources for granted. When compared to what is available for teachers in other systems, we think the combination of content and pedagogy is enviable. Teachers from public and other Christian schools marvel at the splendid organization and presentation of the teacher guides. When Christian parents take an inventory of blessings received by their children in Christian schools, Alliance curriculum belongs on the list.

**John Vanasselt
Director of Communications
Ontario Alliance of Christian Schools
Ancaster, Ontario**

Writing for the wrong papers?

U.S. News and World Report, in an article by John Leo, described the show *Get Real* as follows:

"The first *Get Real* episode begins with a mother's fantasy orgasm and moves on to a long series of smarmy jokes and carefully obscured nude scenes."

Ron DeBoer's article in *Christian Courier* goes as follows:

"Worth a Look: Four dramas worth checking out this fall are *7th Heaven*, *Wind at My Back*, *Twice in a Lifetime* and *Get Real* – the latter of which debuted Sept. 18 on CTV. *Get Real* is another new family drama on Global, with a little more grit than the aforementioned dramas. The Green family is the central focus of this show, with Mitch and Mary going through marriage problems from the pilot episode...."

The thing what bothers me is that *U.S. News and World Report* is a non-Christian although conservative news magazine, and *Christian Courier* is decidedly Christian. It seems John Leo should have written for CC and Ron DeBoer for *U.S. News and World Report*.

However, we enjoy reading *Christian Courier*; it keeps us in touch with our Canadian roots!

**Joanne Kloosterhof
Bradenton, Florida**

Ron DeBoer's response:

After I wrote my comments about *Get Real*, I saw another episode. I stand behind my article. I mentioned that the show might be a show worth checking out, conceding that it contains more grit than the others mentioned.

I wonder whether the *U.S. News* reviewer actually viewed that first show, however, which is a bit of a concern: I have a problem with attacking something by pulling an individual scene out of context. This is not to be interpreted in my endorsing this show, but if the reviewer had watched the entire episode, he would have known that the "orgasm" scene was shown through the voyeur/fantasy perspective of the youngest boy in the family who happens to be a hormonally enhanced adolescent.

By the second episode, the boy is in therapy and fantasizes about his therapist. A little harsh, but real. Individual scenes have to be considered in context. In this second episode, the oldest girl, Meaghan, is going out with a "loser" boyfriend and her mother advises against it; when Meaghan finds out the boyfriend is a loser, she not only loses the boyfriend but must deal with her mother being right, which the girl resents.

Will *Get Real* be too offensive for viewers – and Christian viewers? Perhaps. But these kinds of shows can invoke good dialogue, too. As always, though, discernment is necessary.

Ron DeBoer

'Often' isn't 'all'

Rev. David Feddes, in his comments about my article "When does a marriage begin?" (CC, Sept. 20, 1999) observes that cohabitation is often without commitment. I don't disagree. But to generalize from "often" to "all" is unjustified. The inadequacy of the generalization becomes clear when applied to marriages which started with a ceremony. Just because so many marriages

which started with a ceremony end up in divorce does not mean that we should do away with the ceremony, or with marriage. To prejudice, as Rev. Feddes seems to do, is being prejudiced. The church should do better than that.

**Bert den Boggende
Lacombe, Alberta**

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Media

Touched by an Angel touches on slavery

Alan Doerksen

LONDON, Ont. — The popular CBS TV show *Touched By An Angel* touched on an unusual topic on September 26: slavery in the Sudan. The episode, called "Such a Time As This," came about as a result of an American senator meeting with the producer of the program in Washington, D.C. recently.

According to Glen Pearson, of Christian Solidarity International (CSI), the senator had found out details of slavery in Sudan from CSI, an agency which helps free Sudanese slaves (see front-page story). "The pictures used on the show were slaves redeemed by CSI," reports Pearson. Since the episode aired, CSI has gotten "a strong response" from viewers of the program.

The episode dealt with a fictional American senator who is getting ready to run for re-election. A doctor who has been working in Sudan tries to get her to fly there and see for herself the problem of slavery, so that she can tell Americans and encourage them to help solve the problem. But the senator is concerned about being re-elected, and an advisor tells her: "Forget Sudan. You just worry about the U.S. of A."

However, the senator's young son finds photos of slaves in Sudan, brings them to school for show-and-tell, and starts a campaign at school to free slaves. His



Roma Downey, a principal actor on *Touched By An Angel*.

mother, the senator, faces the difficult decision of whether or not to travel to Sudan. A trip there could jeopardize her career, but it could also result in many slaves being freed. One of the angels challenges her that perhaps she is the one "for such a time as this," just as Esther was in the right place at the right time to bring freedom to the Jews in the Old Testament Book of Esther.

In connection with this episode, *Touched By An Angel* has set up a special Internet website called Angels In Sudan (www.angelsinsudan.com), which presents details about the slavery situation and offers suggestions about how concerned North Americans can help make a difference.

Here are some suggestions the website offers:

- Gather a group together to

watch the *Touched By An Angel* Sudan show. Watch with your family, youth group, other church members, student group, etc.;

- Begin the evening with a potluck supper — invite any Sudanese in your community to make a Sudanese dish;

- Before the show, have a special time of prayer for Sudan;

- Encourage your pastor to have a special focus on Sudan all that Sunday in your church service and/or Sunday school classes.

Conveying a message

The website is more overtly Christian than the TV program, which often mentions God, but — assuming a diverse audience — very rarely mentions Christ. (The principal actors on the show appeared on *Larry King Live* just before the Sudan episode and all publicly acknowledged that they are Christians.)

One page of the website describes the "brutal facts about life and death in Sudan," but concludes on this positive note: "But God has other plans. Amidst the death and persecution in Sudan, the Church has continued to grow. Many are coming to faith in Christ — even on penalty of death. The Body of Christ in Sudan is alive, vibrant, and woven together of the various streams of Christianity — the Catholic, the Protestant, the Pentecostal — all living and dying for the same Lord."

Actor Dean Jones plays 'greatest role' helping the persecuted

Launches 'Christian Rescue Committee'

Dan Wooding

COSTA MESA, Calif. — In the '60s and '70s Hollywood actor Dean Jones starred in many Disney family comedies, including *That Darn Cat!* (1965), *The Love Bug* (1968). These days he feels he is playing his greatest role: as a rescuer of people around the world suffering religious persecution.

Jones has started the Christian Rescue Committee, along with his actress-turned-screenwriter wife, Lory, and their pastor, Jack Hayford, of the Church on the Way in Van Nuys, California.

In an interview recently Jones explained, "The Christian Rescue Committee tries to move people out of danger. We want to provide a way of escape for people who are being persecuted for their faith: Jews, Christians and others."

Another look at Sudan

Jones has just returned from what he called a "harrowing" trip to southern Sudan with Christian Solidarity International (CSI) to help purchase and release slaves there.

"I was there with a small group of people," he said. "The situation is desperate. There is every human rights violation that you can name, or you've ever heard of, going on in Sudan — genocide, ethnic cleansing and slavery. Over two million people have been killed, mostly civilians, mostly Christians.... I believe that the radical regime in Khartoum will try, if they get the oil money that soon will be coming to them, to wipe out the black Christians and animists of the South."

When asked about how he felt about people who say that by freeing slaves, they are encouraging more kidnappings, he responded, "I feel that it's the same kind of criticism that the Underground Railroad got in [the U.S.] in 1850 when you had slavery and the Underground Railroad was the only way that slaves could find any way to freedom. I realize that the purchase of slaves and their release behind rebel lines so they cannot be abducted again, is not an answer. But it does bring visibility to this problem."

Freeing Jews from western Ukraine

Jones says that his new ministry is also providing minivans in western Ukraine to take Jews out of that area, across the border into Hungary and down to Budapest where they are housed at the Raoul Wallenberg Center until the Jewish agency flies them to Israel. (Wallenberg was a Christian Swede who led a rescue operation during World War II that saved thousands of Hungarian Jews. Wallenberg was taken prisoner by the Soviet army on January 17, 1945, and was never heard from again.)

Jones says, "We have also advocated religious freedom before the United Nations Committee on Religious Persecution in Geneva, and we were instrumental in the release of 15 Christians (14 Filipinos and one Dutchman) from prison in Saudi Arabia."

'Hit the ground running'

"We really hit the ground running. I was playing Captain Andy in *Showboat* at the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C., when I heard about these 15 Christians who had been picked up, so I asked a brilliant young lawyer, a Yale graduate, if he would go to Saudi Arabia and try to negotiate the release of these Christians. He said Yes, and so that was the beginning of the Christian Rescue Committee. It's our hope that this rescue committee will be a standing committee that will be a very practical and very immediate response to the threats of death against Christians around the world."

He said that most of the support for the committee has so far come from his wife and their church. "We must now broaden our net," he said. "It's a public corporation and the public must respond, and I believe they will.... We should remember those who are in prison as if we are imprisoned with them. And so we are challenged to overrule the spirit of self-interest in order to extend ourselves to people who are wounded."

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Video review

The Red Violin

Reviewed by Marian Van Til

Not rated. Stars Jason Flemyng, Greta Scacchi, Don McKellar, Sylvia Chang, Samuel L. Jackson. Directed by Jean Francois Girard.

1681. Cremona, Italy. The studio of master violin maker Nicolo Bussotti, as renowned, we're told, as Guarneri and Stradavari.

Bussotti examines an instrument made by one of his young apprentices. He becomes angry, and berates the young man for shoddy workmanship — for producing an instrument upon which he, the Master, cannot, in conscience, place his name.

Sometime later we see Bussotti with an instrument he has made wholly himself, lovingly finishing it with an odd red-tinged varnish, placing his signature on a paper strip, delicately poking the glue-coated paper into the bowels of the beautiful instrument so those who care to look will know who has built this masterpiece.

As Bussotti works in his shop, at his home his wife, very great with child, worries. She is somewhat too old to be having a child. She fears for its future, and her own. She asks her maid, a dabbler in card reading and fortune telling, to tell her of her future. The maid is reluctant, but the lady insists.

Signora Bussotti is told to choose five cards. One by one they are turned face up. The maid reads the first portent of a strange, turbulent, even violent future....

Deja vu

1998. Montreal, Quebec. A famous auction house. The Chinese government has put a number of excellent stringed instruments on the block. It appears that the famous Bussotti "red violin" is one of them.

We see a tall black man, a New Yorker stride in, late, ask someone to remind him not to forget his coat, and then pace in the back of the tiered room. The violin is briefly described. There's a slight delay before it appears, carefully attached to a revolving, velvet-backed display board. The audience is attentive, almost tense. The bidding starts in the hundreds of thousands....

Cremona. A boy bursts up to the door of Bussotti's workshop. Bussotti wants him sent away. No, no, the gentleman must come. His wife. A baby. Things are not well.

In order not to give away the plot — and in a sense, this film is a



"thriller" of sorts — we must stop here.

Montreal. This looks familiar. Same scene, same words introducing The Instrument. Same slight delay in displaying the violin. But now we're following a different character. The film replays the opening auction sequence three, four, five times, focussing on a new or different character or set of characters each time, to gradually complete the picture. This technique has been used before in films, of course, but it's used here particularly adroitly. Each time we come back to that scene, the film doesn't so much add details as give us a new sense of the meaning of the details we've mostly seen before.

We come back four more times, too, to the maid and her cards, and we learn we must listen carefully to what she says about each. Each of the representations on the five cards shown to Signora Bussotti characterizing "her" future turn out to be five characters or episodes in the "life" of this violin which was her husband's last and greatest masterpiece. And we finally understand how and why the violin itself has such a strong, if macabre, personal link to Bussotti and his beloved wife.

The Red Violin traces the 300-year history of this fictional violin by singling out a handful of its owners and those with a particular interest in the instrument, and demonstrating their strange, turbulent, even violent relationship with this exquisite instrument.

And that oft-repeated short delay in displaying the violin in the

Canadian production (beautifully filmed in five countries) came out last November and, in fact, opened the Toronto International Film Festival. But it spent almost no time in the theatres.

Seduced by Beauty

This well-acted, ambitious

TV series lists 'top 10 religion stories of the millennium'

NEW YORK, N.Y. (EP) — A series on public television in the U.S. has compiled a list of the "top 10 religion stories of the millennium."

Among the choices made by "Religion and Ethics News-weekly" are the split of Christianity into eastern and western branches; the Crusades; and Martin Luther's 95 theses, the event often described as having initiated the Protestant Reformation.

The 19th-century enlightenment drive against religious ideas led by Sigmund Freud, Charles Darwin and Karl Marx also appears on the list. Only one 20th century event, the Holocaust, was selected.

Here's the list, presented in chronological order:

1. *The Great Schism*. the 1054 split of Christianity into Eastern Orthodox and Roman Catholic branches.

2. *The Crusades*. These began in 1095, when Eastern Orthodox leaders asked the Pope for help fighting Muslim forces that had invaded the Holy Land. Muslims drove the Crusaders out by the end of the 13th century.

3. *The Spread of Islam*. The Moslem faith reached most of India by the 13th century, and consolidated the Middle East and parts of Europe, culminating in the capture of Constantinople in 1453 by the Islamic Empire of the Ottomans.

4. *The Gutenberg Bible*. Johannes Gutenberg invented the printing press and published the Bible in 1455, resulting in mass distribution of religious teachings and ideas.

5. *Church support of art, music and intellectual life*. Examples include Rome's commissioning of Michelangelo to paint the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel, and religious patronage of universities such as Oxford and Cambridge.

6. *Martin Luther's 95 Theses*. The posting of the 95 Theses in 1517, in which Luther accused Catholic leaders of corruption and false doctrine, and fueled what became the Reformation.

7. *Missionary movements*. In the 16th century early European explorers took predominantly Catholic missionaries around the world. By the 18th and 19th centuries, a second wave of missionary

movements was being led by Protestants.

8. *Religious Liberty*. English Puritans traveled to seek religious freedom in the New World, founding colonies on the idea that government should not prohibit the free exercise of religious belief (and least, not their own).

9. *Challenges to religious ideas in the 19th century*, including Charles Darwin's theory of the evolution of the species; psychoanalyst Sigmund Freud's suggestion that religion is an illusion; and Karl Marx's materialistic world view which inspired communist revolutions around the world.

10. *The Holocaust*. Centuries of anti-Semitic persecution in Europe culminated in the Holocaust, when an estimated six million Jews were killed by the Nazis.

Its makes an obvious and forceful point about the dangers of being obsessed by beauty — beauty which is often not so benign as it seems. It is not a family film in the sense of being appropriate for children younger than teenagers. It has adult themes, and, when portraying a demonically talented, Paganini-inspired 19th century owner of the violin named Frederick Pope, there are two scenes containing partial nudity.

All the scenes involving Pope, however, particularly adeptly demonstrate the strange notion of artistic "inspiration" and the obsession with "beauty" (of many kinds) which characterized 19th century Romanticism in music and all the arts. While the Pope episodes show especially starkly the dark path down which such obsession can lead, each of the violin's owners, and would-be owners, suffers from this obsession in some form.

And when it comes down to it, we see that even something as sublime as Beauty can seduce and enslave us if we allow ourselves to become its worshipful servants.

The program's list was compiled by series staff members in consultation with scholars. Host Bob Abernethy noted that the list places a heavy emphasis on Christianity and Europe. "It was that kind of millennium," he said, but admitted that others might find the list "arbitrary or just plain wrong."

Church

New attempt to restrict religious freedom expected to fail in Russian Duma

Roman Lunkin

MOSCOW (Keston News Service) – Communists and members of Vladimir Zhirinovskiy's Liberal Democratic Party (LDPR) will soon be promoting a draft law "On traditional religious organizations in Russia" which is even more restrictive than the current law.

Duma (Parliamentary) deputy and LDPR member Viktor Koriyenko is one of the supporters of the draft, but Koriyenko says that he is not certain that the Duma will even discuss it, or that it will pass if it is discussed.

Two years ago, Communist deputy Vladimir Lisichkin introduced the draft to parliament, but it never reached the floor. On May 12 of this year, the draft was again proposed by Koriyenko and two others, but the parliamentary legal committee and the parliamentary committee for religious and informal associations gave it a negative assessment.

According to the draft, only religious organizations which have existed on the territory of Russia for more than 100 years will be accorded the status of traditional religions. In a separate clause, the draft states that only Orthodoxy and Islam are traditional religions. These confessions will have the right to have their representatives at regional and federal levels of government.

In an explanatory note, the draft

law states that the 1997 Law on Religion did not accord any preferential status to traditional religions and that this draft is intended to correct this omission and act as an addition to the already existing federal law.

The authors of the draft state that on the basis of the proposed law, separate federal laws on the Orthodox Church, on Old Believers and on Muslims may be passed.

Moreover, Communists and Zhirinovskiy supporters express the hope that this new law would help regional governments "to identify and establish clear relations with a single Orthodox diocese or a single Muslim group" and exclude "foreign missionaries who have created 'alternative churches, spiritual organizations and missions which undermine the authority of traditional religious institutions' from official relations with the state."

Insignificant?

Koriyenko says he had wanted Orthodoxy alone to be accorded the status of traditional religion in the law, but he was forced to accept that Islam be granted the same status, given that there are 20 million Muslims in Russia: "We applied the principle of the number of believers and by applying this measure only two religions qualified: Orthodoxy and Islam. All the other religions are insignificant."

He also said that there should be a separate law on other religions in the future which would supersede the 1997 law.

"You need not worry, nothing is going to happen in the Duma. Orthodoxy will not be defended," stated Nina Krivel'skaya, LDPR deputy, colonel in the militia and author of anti-sectarian booklets defending Orthodoxy from "sects."

She is also convinced that the law should give preference to Orthodoxy because it is a traditional religion. Moreover, it is the Moscow Patriarchate which should be given preference. Islam takes second place, though Krivel'skaya did state that Judaism and Buddhism are also traditional religions. Krivel'skaya would have voted in favor of the draft law on traditional religions, but she is convinced that the Duma will not pass the law and that it is unlikely even to be debated. Krivel'skaya added that the Duma is unlikely to consider any change in Russia's religion statutes, including amendments to the 1997 law, this year or next.

Serious threat if passed

Every member of the Duma has the right to propose draft laws on any subject, and the Duma receives 500 such proposals annually. Only a small proportion actually go through parliament, so the existence of this draft law is not

really significant, many observers say.

At present the Communists are preoccupied with the election campaign. Gennadi Zyuganov and his electorate do not appear interested in the religious question in this pre-election period.

Duma specialists Lev Levinson and Mikhail Osadchev believe that the composition of the new parliament, due to convene in January

2000 following the December 1999 elections, will determine the fate of the religious question. While the draft law has no immediate chance of passage, there are clearly some in the Duma who want to impose even more restrictions on religious freedom. Depending on what happens in Russian politics as a whole, such proposals could become a serious threat in the future.

Abductions, violence continue to plague Christians in Chechnya

GROZNY, Chechnya (EP) – Violence against Christians continues in Chechnya. Recent turmoil in the country is caused by Russian troops and Chechnyan militants battling against each other for control of the country. There is little law and order in the capital city of Grozny. Crime gangs, known for murder and kidnapping, roam the streets and prey on the poor and elderly.

The congregation of Grozny Baptist Church has dwindled down to only a few members as violence forces many Christians to flee the country.

Compass Direct reports that 23 members of the church have fled to southern Russia since June. The 40 remaining members of the congregation are virtually trapped inside Chechnya. The country's government declared a state of emergency on Aug. 15 in response to continued fighting between Russian soldiers and Islamic militants. All border exits in the country are closed.

Previous leader beheaded

Two members of the small church have been murdered, presumably by criminal gangs. Church members believe an elderly woman of the church was murdered so a tenant in her building could take over her apartment.

The other murder victim of Grozny Baptist's congregation was church leader Aleksandr Kulakov. He was last seen alive on March 12; 13 days later a church member made a gruesome discovery at a town market. Kulakov's severed head was on display in one of the market booths. Compass Direct's sources report that displaying severed heads is a common practice of Chechnyan criminals.

Two members of the congregation were abducted in early August. Kidnappers demanded a

\$4,000 ransom for one of the women abducted. "The lady's daughter is now living somewhere in Russia," a source told Compass Direct. "The kidnappers probably think she would be able to pay a sizable ransom for her mother's release." The other abductee, a young deacon, was kidnapped during the second week of August. Church members fear he is dead since there has been no ransom demand from his kidnappers.

Abductions a tool

Abductions are a tool Chechnyan crime gangs frequently use to generate money and spread terror among neighborhoods. Earlier in the year a group of seven people living outside of Chechnya were abducted by gangs and forced into the country. Included in the group were two Russian Orthodox priests who were forced to write ransom notes to the head of the Russian Orthodox Church. After two months the priests were rescued by Russian special forces during an undercover operation. After meeting with the two priests Patriarch Alesky II, the leader of the Russian Orthodox church, said, "Kidnapping is immoral. When priests are involved it is doubly immoral."

In late 1998, Herb Gregg, a veteran missionary with The Evangelical Alliance Mission (TEAM) was abducted by Chechnyans and spent nearly eight months in captivity. Abductors repeatedly demanded a ransom for Gregg, going so far as to cut off part of Gregg's right index finger to demonstrate their serious intentions. Although no ransom was sent to his captors, Gregg was released on June 29. As violence and abductions continue, Chechnyan Christians still have no way to leave the country.

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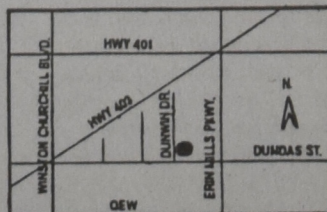
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OCTOBER 18, 1999

Church

Police raid another Turkish Protestant church

ISTANBUL, Turkey (Compass) — Three weeks after Izmir's security police raided a Turkish Protestant church and arrested 40 Christians (see CC Oct. 4), the Istanbul security police barged into another Sunday morning worship service on October 3, arresting most of the adult members of the congregation, along with 11 foreigners and their five children.

Church elder Habib Anli told Compass he was about to begin his sermon at the Zeytinburnu Fellowship of Jesus Christ when several

security police officers entered the building. The plainclothes officers agreed to Anli's request to wait until the worship had concluded to make their arrests, but they videotaped the remainder of the service.

At the conclusion, more than 20 police surrounded and searched the church, detaining the adult attenders except for young mothers, their children and the elderly.

When some 30 arrested Christians would not fit in the police vans, the officers allowed some of the church members to drive their

own vehicles to security police headquarters.

Although police initially claimed that a "complaint" had been filed against the church, Turkish members of the congregation said interrogators in the Terrorism Division at security police headquarters accused them of conducting an "illegal" church.

Same pattern

Following the same pattern as the Izmir authorities, Istanbul security police insisted that newly

established churches had to have written permission issued by the Turkish government. According to attorneys consulted by the Turkish Protestant churches, this exceeds the existing legal requirement to inform authorities in writing when a facility is designated as a place of worship.

A Turkish-language congregation founded in March 1993, the Zeytinburnu Fellowship had informed the proper authorities when they purchased their church building six years ago.

Most of the 60-strong congregation are Protestants of ethnic Christian descent, mainly Syrian Christian and Armenian, although according to co-pastors Ilyas Anli and Orhan Ozcelik, there are some baptized Turkish converts.

Afraid of foreigners?

One of the pastors told Compass that an officer told him he had to obtain written permission "every single time" a foreigner at-

tended a meeting of his church.

The expatriates arrested included a Swiss family with four children, resident in Turkey for the past six years. The father heads the Istanbul liaison office of a Swiss chemical technology firm.

The day after the arrests, the Istanbul state prosecutor ruled that the detained Christians should be released after police interrogations were completed. But late that night, the remaining nine foreigners all remained under arrest. They include two Turkish Bulgarian pastors, six Korean nationals and a citizen of Kyrgyzstan.

In contrast to the highly publicized Izmir church raid, no Turkish TV crews or journalists accompanied this latest raid. Press spokespersons of the Interior Ministry in Ankara, the Istanbul Governor's Office and the Istanbul Security Police headquarters all professed no knowledge of the police raid when contacted by Compass.

My sister's wedding

My little sister will be married this week.

She is my only sister, five years younger, and for many years was my roommate. I remember many nights of giggling after the lights were out, arguing over whose turn it was to pick up the room, and swapping more than a few clothing articles back and forth.

Now, on Saturday, I will officiate at her wedding. She will stand before me in a beautiful dress with her long dark hair pulled back and her handsome groom at her side and I will pronounce them married. I can hardly think about it without choking up.

For most weddings, I arrive at church about a hour beforehand, don my robe, and review my message one more time.

For this one, I'll be in the church basement hours ahead, helping her dress, carrying her train, handing her lipstick. I'll be passing out flowers, smiling in pictures, adjusting her veil. For most weddings, when I see the bride walk down the aisle on her father's arm, I choke up whether I know the bride well or not. For this one, I'm praying that I can hold it together well enough so that I can speak without breaking down.

It's a whole different feel, this one. It's not just another commitment on the calendar. It's my sister's wedding.

Pampering didn't spoil her

Becky came from Korea in 1977. Since then I have watched her grow from a happy, adorable little girl into a funny, confident, mature young woman. I have heard her practice the piano for more hours than either of us could count. I drove back from college to watch her play volleyball. I cheered her on at soccer games. And now she's getting married.

She's the youngest of the four of us. She's the girl who read *Charlotte's Web* three times and cried each time. This is the girl who loved cats amid a family of dog lovers. This is a girl who got to play drums in band even though Mom told the rest of us we couldn't choose the drums. This is the girl who ate Pop-Tarts for breakfast even though when the rest of us were young we had to eat oatmeal or Cheerios. This is the girl who used to wake me up in the middle of the night because she was

Chapter & Verse



Al Wolters
• Mary S. Hulst Antonides

laughing in her sleep.

I'm not usually a drippy, sentimental person. I'm not one who cries at Hallmark commercials. But when I imagine placing my hands over hers and Joe's, and pronouncing them husband and wife, I get a lump in my throat. I think it's because I have not only a long history with her, but a future too. This is a bride who may someday choose me as the first person she tells that she is pregnant. This is a bride whose anniversaries I will help to celebrate. This is a bride who will go Christmas shopping with me. This is a bride whose children I may watch play volleyball or soccer. This is a bride who will be a part of the rest of my life.

You know why

So, Becky, please understand if my eyes well with tears as I watch you come down the aisle. Understand if my voice cracks as I pronounce you married. Understand if I need to take a deep breath or speak more softly during my message. Understand if I just look at you at times on Saturday and am unable to talk. Understand that it's because this isn't just a regular wedding. Understand that it's because I love you so much. Understand that it's because you are my sister.

I pray for you and Joe that you may be richly blessed by God. I pray that you will have good health, many years, and laughter. I pray that you will be quick to forgive. I pray that you will grow closer to each other as you grow closer to God. And I pray, too, Becky, that if God blesses you with children, they will giggle together in the middle of the night, and cheer each other on in soccer, and cry at each other's weddings. I pray, Becky, that your little children will love each other as much as you and I loved, and love, each other.

And I pray that all siblings may share these kinds of things together.

Mary Hulst Antonides is pastor of Eastern Avenue Christian Reformed Church, Grand Rapids, Michigan.

Church member rebuilds organ for Ontario congregation

Marian Van Til, with files from Charles van der Meulen

CAMBRIDGE, Ont. — Many years ago Henk Oudshoorn served as an organ builder's apprentice, but then went on to become a qualified piano technician and tuner instead. Twelve years ago, however, shortly after Henk's congregation of Maranatha Christian Reformed Church in Cambridge, Ontario, moved into its current church building, Oudshoorn and his church saw an opportunity for him to use the knowledge he had gained as an organ apprentice. Thus, he began rebuilding an existing organ for the Maranatha church. From time to time during those 12 years, Oudshoorn was assisted by various members of the congregation whose skills came in handy.

While a small portion of the organ has been in use since 1991, with the recent voicing of new pipes by a professional organ builder, and a tuning of the instrument, the work has now been completed.

A vision of bigger and better

The congregation owned a pipe organ which had been removed from its former church building. This instrument had been in storage for a year and was in serious need of repairs. Oudshoorn ap-

proached the church council for approval to do the work in his spare time, and they agreed.

While the contract called for refurbishing and installing the existing organ, Henk had a vision of expanding the instrument into a much larger European style organ. This he was able to accomplish by acquiring both new pipes and a substantial number of used ones from various sources, the latter which he was able to purchase at very reasonable prices.

Persistence rewarded

Maranatha regularly received financial contributions for the project, and a large amount of free labor helped keep costs to a minimum. Even so, it was difficult to stay within the approved budget, and many technical difficulties had to be overcome. But Oudshoorn persisted.

The design and quality of workmanship has been praised by both Canadian and Dutch organ builders who have had a close look at the project. The two-manual instrument has 48 ranks and contains 2,424 pipes.

The well-known Canadian organist Dr. John van der Tuin has accepted the invitation to play a dedicatory recital on November 19 to which the public is invited (see Calendar of Events in this issue).

Environment/Personal Musings

A walk, a rock, and a thought this fall

Every fall I get the same feeling. A day comes when I have a powerful urge to take a walk in the woods, to go outside and just be away from the city. What does it is the combination of the sounds and smells made by wind over damp leaves, and of the golden rays of an early sinking sun.

I guess these things imprinted on me when I was a boy in western Washington State. I love heading out along a forest road and seeing the fading fall grasses, shrubs and flowers. There is a growing sense of anticipation that a ruffed grouse or deer might explode from cover in front of you. I draw inspiration and insight from these walks in the wood. There is joy in seeing something new, or in renewing a long forgotten acquaintance with a creature.

Rocks of the ages

Over the years I have added inanimate objects to the list of creatures I look for in my travels. I don't know rocks well, but the little I have learned from geologists

tells me an amazing story. Tom Chacko, geologist at the University of Alberta, an outstanding teacher and a fellow believer, spends his time "cooking" rocks and searching for ancient granites on the Canadian Shield. He rattles on about 1.5 billion-year-old rock formations that crop up in some beautiful spots in northern Alberta.

So I listen and learn a bit more about God's creation. But have you ever wondered who looks after the rocks? I mean: who is the steward of these old things?

Most folks will say these old things don't need a steward. They don't need us looking after them. They just are; they simply exist. As Harvard paleontologist Stephen J. Gould asserts, "We are stewards of nothing." On a geological time scale, we human beings make little difference to the earth, he says.

But I wonder. Not just about rocks, but about many features of the creation. There is a paradox here that doesn't yield so easily to this formulation. If we agree with Gould's conclusion about rocks,

what shall we say about the other creatures, and the rivers, oceans and air?

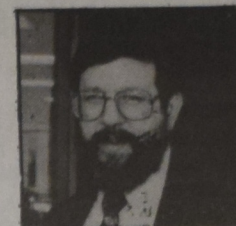
A matter of scale

We live in a changing time. The scale of the relationship of human-kind and the earth is in flux. We have changed the course of rivers here in Canada and in many parts of the world; we have emptied lakes and vast areas of wetlands. Our current debates in Canada include whether to export water, whether to sell shiploads of fresh water from either the Great Lakes or Atlantic Canada.

And we human beings now move more earth and rock than the glaciers of the earth do each year. Our individual activities may be small, but our accumulated effects can now be seen on a global scale.

Our impact on the non-living creation is no small matter. Canada has been estimated to have over one-fifth of the world's fresh water, much of it in ice in snow. As I write this, another report tells of snow in the mountains of British

Creation waits...



John Wood

Columbia which is laced with human-produced, persistent toxic compounds.

So amidst the complexity of many other issues in our time comes the pressing need to reconsider our impact on not just the living, but also the non-living components of the earth.

I think the Scriptures provide a clear-eyed view of what we need to do. The psalmist wrote that the rivers will "clap their hands." And Jesus said that the stones would praise him if his children failed to do so. Our circumstances are providing the motivation. Now all we need are the hearts of willing stew-

ards, ready to make the effort needed.

But there is the hard core of the problem. We don't seem to recognize air, earth and water as fellow creatures, capable of giving praise to their creator, too. Maybe we need to take a walk in the woods and look again at some rocks, and consider how they praise Him.

John R. Wood teaches environmental science at The King's University College in Edmonton. He is on sabbatical leave for this academic year.

Witnessing the Reformed witness

Growing up in a small Ontario town where it seemed that half of the families were from the Netherlands, I had an early and rich exposure to the Dutch Canadian way of life. Sitting in a course on cultural anthropology this fall my suspicions were confirmed. The Dutch Canadians could be classified as a "culture" all their own.

Our professor began the course by helping us define our studies. What I gleaned from that discussion is this: "Culture," simply stated, involves a way of life as shared by an identifiable group of people. It encompasses learned

behaviors, beliefs, values, and artifacts generally passed down from one generation to the next.

By that definition it's easy to see how I came to think of my Dutch neighbors as making up a specific culture. Many factors made them an identifiable group. For instance, many came from extraordinarily clean homes, where the vegetable and flower gardens were huge and well-tended. They had surnames that either began with "van" or ended in "sma," and which were usually several syllables long. Their families were often very large, and the vehicle of

choice was apparently the station wagon, especially ones with the "wooden" sides.

Even though they had their own schools, Dutch kids were typically sociable; they had fun teaching the rest of us Dutch words and phrases. This was particularly amusing to all of us, since, in order to properly pronounce the "g" in Dutch, you need to pretend there's something big stuck in your throat (maybe one of those impressive peppermints they were always sucking on.)

Not only did they go to church twice on Sundays, but they spent Tuesday nights there for catechism, and Thursday nights for "Young Peoples." Most of the Dutch people I knew attended Reformed churches of one brand or another. They held their faith in high esteem, but it took me until my teens to realize there were distinctions between the various Reformed churches.

Not until I married a Dutchman did I understand it takes more than being Dutch to be Reformed.

It took time to learn that certain ideas which appeared to have ethnic origins were actually born of spiritual convictions. The notion of a Christian Farmers' Federation, for example, struck me as odd. What did business have to do with faith? And I never dreamed I would spend thousands of dollars

Intangible things

Heidi VanDerSlikke



and countless volunteer hours to put my kids through Christian schools. What did math or history have to do with faith?

But I have seen the light! For more than 20 years I believe God has been shaping my attitude to grasp the concept that "all of life is religion." I now understand why our faith needs to be integrated into our livelihood, and how a Christian perspective has to permeate all of a believer's learning experience.

Faith has an impact

I see people of Reformed faith living out their Christianity in the face of a world that prefers to be in darkness. (They're not the only ones, of course, but their tradition has a comprehensive biblical worldview which many Christian traditions don't.) I see the church working as an agent for improvement not only here in Canada, but across the world through organizations ranging from the local "Coffee Break" Bible study pro-

grams for women to the Christian Reformed World Relief Committee (CRWRC).

And what about the observations I made as a youngster? Well, I confess that they are somewhat superficial and largely stereotypical. Nevertheless, any Dutch person worth his or her *dropjes* will admit they're mostly true. As for me, I can never be Dutch, but I have become surprisingly Reformed, and thankful for it.

As a bonus my surname now does start with "Van." We own a charming mini-van with "wood" sides, have a collection of "Delfts blauw" artifacts, and I can make a terrific vegetable soup with those tasty little meat balls ("balletjes") in it.

It may not be perfect, but is the Reformed witness at least still warm? You bet your balletjes!

Heidi Vander Slikke lives in Harriston, Ont., and enjoys writing.

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Relationships

Getting
Unstuck

Arlene Van Hove

Healing comes from the heart

Jordan and Stephanie sit silently and stare broodingly out of the window. "We pray daily for healing," says Jordan wistfully. "It helps us get through the day. But there is no real change between us. The anger and frustration is still there!" It is their fourth session and their unhappiness is evident on their faces.

"How do you understand 'healing'?" I quietly ask them.

"I thought coming here and airing my frustrations with Jordan would be a 'healing' thing to do," responds Stephanie. Jordan says, "I thought talking about our issues would help us see things more clearly and lower our frustration level."

"Could 'healing' and 'change' be related?" I prod.

Stephanie responds, "I always thought healing would come from outside of myself. It's something God is in control of, and we have to wait for it. A bit like being sick with the flu and taking it easy in order to become healthy again."

Jordan adds, "I'm thinking, as I'm listening to Stephanie talk, that healing needs to be a more active thing than she described, and change is probably an important part of the process."

On the right track

Both Stephanie and Jordan are on the right track. The goal of most therapies is to work towards healing and change. As Christians some of us undoubtedly prefer to use the term "healing" to make room for the work of the Holy Spirit. The downside of this view is that we can become too passive and expect the Spirit to be more involved than we are ourselves.

Healing can be either straightforward or complex. Some of us need long-term therapy, while others may want to work on a piece of themselves every once in a while. We all have different needs. There are some major aspects to healing ourselves, however, and change plays a large role in this process.

Healing can involve working through lingering emotional hurt. How we choose to do that will be unique to our situation, beliefs and circumstances. It usually involves identifying and processing unresolved childhood events.

Healing can also include resolving the "shoulds" and "musts" our environment has unconsciously placed on us. Here we evaluate whether we are living our own or someone else's standards, expectations and beliefs.

New understanding

Healing can also include removing excessive self-criticism. It can give us a new understanding of having been created in the image of God. Healing can also involve accepting responsibility for our choices and learning that, while we may not have been responsible for what happened to us, we are responsible for working through the impact of abuse, trauma or other dysfunctional behaviors. It includes setting boundaries and developing a sense of ourselves that is in harmony with our biblical beliefs.

Healing can involve challenging our behavior and learning new responses. This may be frightening but can be rewarding when we learn to manage ourselves in more productive and healthy ways causing us to move towards greater emotional maturity.

In a nutshell, the healing I look for is usually a matter of the heart. Some of us keep such a tight lid on our inner life that nothing is allowed in for fear of upsetting the safety zone we have set for ourselves. But a willing and open heart is usually the cornerstone of healthy change. Furthermore, the heart is the workshop of the Holy Spirit. Everything issues from it. If the heart is in the right place, psychological strength is just like developing physical abilities. The more we exercise, the stronger we become.

Arlene Van Hove is a psychotherapist with Cascade Christian Counselling Association in Surrey, B.C.



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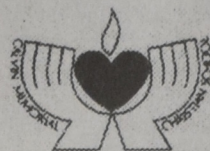
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On Being Reformed

Hot buttons, a TULIP and the Canons of Dort

Harry der Nederlanden

Nearly everyone has a "hot button," some topic he or she is touchy about. Usually it's something personal. Make a crack about Gloria's weight and you're liable to feel her wrath. Drop a hint to George that he's a tyrant around the workplace and he's sure to raise the roof. We all learn to tiptoe around such personal hot-button topics. In the public square, too, there are certain subjects that politicians cannot discuss frankly without risking their careers. They learn to tread carefully. The same is true in the church.

In recent years, ordaining women was such a topic in several Reformed and Presbyterian churches. Homosexuality seems to be the next hot zone. How does an issue become so charged with meaning and emotion? It seems clear that, certainly on personal hot-button topics, it is not this or that isolated fact that sets us off. That "fact" is just a trigger. Beneath it a powder keg of unresolved problems erupt to the surface when someone touches the trigger. Neither "women in office" nor homosexuality would arouse so much passion if they were not connected to larger visions of truth and justice.

Some issues that sparked great passion in the past have simply faded away. I used to have a copy of a *Life* magazine issue that featured Rev. B.J. Haan, long-time president of Dordt College in Sioux Center, Iowa. Haan had successfully campaigned to keep a movie theatre out of Sioux Center. At the time, many evangelical churches took similar stances against Hollywood.

Over the years, most Reformed and evangelical churches have developed more subtle stances over toward secular culture (as did Rev. Haan). Now nearly every evangelical magazine carries movie reviews. Most trigger-issues in recent memory concern moral and lifestyle issues. It hasn't always been so. Can you imagine two Christians almost coming to blows

nowadays in defence of infra- or supralapsarianism? Yes, it has happened in living memory, and it happened in a Christian bookstore. Fifty years ago, theological topics we now no longer even understand could raise the room temperature close to the boiling point.

Benign neglect

Not all such hot buttons disappear, of course. Nor should they. The church is not just an assembly of contemporaries. It is also linked to its past. It has a history; traditions give it character, the way hard knocks form your character. The church has picked up a few scars, and learned some things in the process.

Few questions or issues are totally new. Many have been addressed before. Confessional churches put some of this history up front. They, in effect, declare openly, "This is where we've been and this is who we have become. This is how we have come to understand God's Word in fellowship with the saints of old."

In many churches we've developed what might be called a "Benign Neglect Button." This is the button we hit when we get tired of squabbling about some topic; when it has been talked to death, or when it has caused too much division. Nowadays almost any allusion to theological issues makes some of us reach for the Neglect Button. "Let's not get into theology here," we say — often with good reason. Nothing can drag out a meeting like a theological debate. If we put all such debates on the back burner, however, eventually we end up with a church that lugs its confessions with it like so much dead weight.

The Christian Reformed Church and most Reformed churches with roots in the Netherlands include the *Canons of Dort* among the confessional statements that define their identity. These are often summed up in the acronym TULIP, the "five points of Calvinism." Without conducting a survey, my guess is that very few



Delegates to the historic Synod of Dort meet in a large recreation hall in Dordrecht, the Netherlands.

members of the CRC, especially among the young, would eagerly square off against evangelicals to defend their mighty *Canons*.

The cynic in me asks: "But who becomes passionate on any theological topic nowadays?" It is undoubtedly true that we have imbibed the pragmatism of our culture, so that we don't get very excited about ideas that seem to have no practical implications.

Of course, to suggest to a Calvinist that the five points of Calvinism have no practical implications is absurd. The intent of the five points is to put in the foreground the sovereignty of God, and if that doesn't have practical implications then neither does sunshine and rain.

Cotton-denim Calvinists

I consider myself, if not a dyed-in-the-wool Calvinist, then at least a cotton-denim Calvinist. Biblical Christians are called into the Kingdom in their workaday clothes. These have to be practical. They must allow us to bend, to get them dirty, and to toss them into the washing machine without special treatment. Cotton denim overalls are what the church needs.

After my father died, hanging in his closet I found a suit he took with him from the Netherlands almost 50 years earlier. It was made of thick, stiff wool, with horsehair woven into the lapels and shoulders to further stiffen them. He hadn't worn it for years, preferring a softer, more flexible fabric. Although he was no fashion hound, I'm sure he also wanted to be more

in style. Yet he never tossed the old suit out. That was left for me to do.

When I read over the *Canons of Dort*, they remind me of my dad's old suit. In many snapshots in the family album and in my mind's eye, my dad is wearing that suit. When I ran my fingers over the rough cloth, I felt as if I were touching him. It seemed almost part of him, certainly part of my memory of him. So I tossed it out with some reluctance. It didn't even go into the box destined for the mission store. No one would want to wear that stiff, old suit. When I defend the *Canons*, as I have on more than one occasion, I feel as if I am putting on my father's old suit.

Shadows with the light

I have no qualms about defending election. Although I would not use TULIP to present my faith to a non-Christian, or to someone from another Christian tradition, or even to my own children, I do confess the biblical teachings behind the five points. At the time they were written, the *Canons* undoubtedly did shed light on the biblical teachings they seek to defend.

Nowadays, they cast as much shadow as light. For many, I believe, the *Canons* are like a very bright, harsh light that exaggerates prominent features of your face so as to almost turn you into a caricature of yourself. This effect was not entirely accidental. The Synod of Dort hardly sat down to draw up an outline of the faith in its totality. It was defending one particular doctrine against those seeking to

fudge it, to make it more acceptable to human reason.

The *Canons* are more marked by their context than are any of the other creeds and confessions of the Reformed and Presbyterian churches. The *Canons* represent the Reformed faith not just in a stiff suit but wearing boxing gloves. A church's confessions, however, should be its workaday clothes, and you can't plant tulips wearing boxing gloves.

Tiptoeing through the tulips

Notice that I didn't say that the clothes should be stylish and comfortable. The church leaders who gathered at the Synod of Dort were not trying to make the biblical teachings more attractive, more reasonable, more modern to their enlightened contemporaries. They were rather intent on constructing a powerful, coherent intellectual battlement to ward off the attacks by Arminians on a key doctrine of the Reformed faith. In doing so, of course, Reformed representatives employed the rhetorical and logical tools of the time. It is not a style that wears well today.

But this is not the *Canons'* most important drawback. That drawback is that the way they are formulated seems to encourage ways of thinking about election that trap people in unbiblical dilemmas.

I want to tiptoe carefully through the tulips here. Many of the church leaders who convened at Dordrecht had had personal contact with the first generation of Reformers. Their intent was pastoral as well as theological: it was to uphold the central Good News (re)discovered by the Reformation: that salvation depends not on our own faulty capacities or institutions, but only on the work of Christ, imputed to us by faith.

All their focus is, therefore, on ascribing everything to God, and to him alone. This is certainly supported by Scripture, but it is hardly the whole story. Scripture also puts considerable emphasis on our responsibility, not just for sin, but also to respond in faith and in a life of obedience.

I'm not saying anything here that's new. Nor am I trying to defend the confused theology of the Arminian party. I do, however, wonder whether the phrasing of the *Canons* needlessly creates parties and conflicts, and at the same time poses an obstacle to understanding. Can we not do a better job of formulating the biblical teaching of election for today, one cut from cotton denim rather than stiff, abrasive wool?

TAKE HOLD OF GOD AND PULL

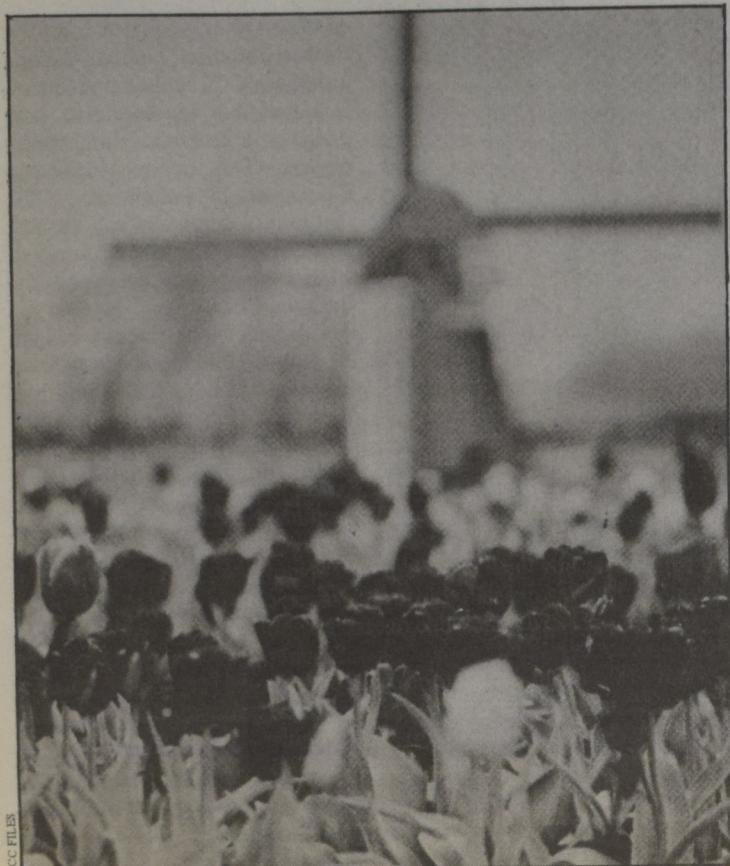
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On Being Reformed

Please don't pick the tulips



CC FILES

Harry der Nederlanden

Tourists who marvel at the tulip fields of the Netherlands, planted in huge beds of a single color, often don't understand that for the most part these farmers are not growing flowers. Rosy-checked Dutch damsels don't tiptoe through the flower beds morning and evening to pick bouquets to peddle on the street corners and in fragrant little flower shops. On a given day, all the tulips are cut like hay and dumped. The real crop is under the ground, like potatoes. The farmer is growing tulip bulbs for export.

Like the tourist, many who come upon the TULIPS of Calvinism look on them as bright flowers to be picked separately. As soon as the tourists begin to sniff them in their individuality, the flowers play wild tricks on the mind.

Total depravity. A bloom that is highly valued because of its dark, almost black hue. It has a bitter fragrance, breathes a sigh of gathering doom. The master of the garden, it seems, despite the garden's bright blaze of color, is really the Prince of Darkness grim. All those who have not been inoculated against this flower's overpowering scent are turned into devils incarnate. Their good manners and virtues, like the gorgeous colors of the flowers, exist only to tempt, to seduce and to lull into a sense of guilty complacency. They are all, all flowers of evil.

Unconditional election. A chameleon flower. In the hands of one it stands erect, white and pure. Its fragrance penetrates deep into the soul, turning it into a white diamond of dazzling splendor. In the hands of another, however, it immediately turns putrid, and its equally putrid stench pollutes that soul, steeping it in dark despair. It sorts the pilgrims into two opposite groups: an elite who march across the meadows in their wooden shoes holding their white tulips aloft like triumphal banners; and a smelly, mouldy mass who scurry off into the darkness like rats looking for holes to hide in.

Limited atonement. When the fields are fertilized, it turns out, not all plants receive nutrients.

Many, perhaps most, are simply inundated with sludge dredged from polluted canals. These produce blooms that lift their petals as brilliantly to the sun as the others. But when harvest comes, the harvesters find nothing but rot underground, and the bulbs are spaded under to serve as compost. But, hey, they also serve who serve as compost.

Irresistible grace. The siren of tulipdom. The fragrance of this flower is so ravishing it sucks the soul out of your body and the mind out of your head. You are turned into a slave, a puppet, a loose-jointed Pinnocchio. Those under its positive spell can do no wrong. Life is a bed of roses, er, tulips. No

matter what they do, they come out smelling like...well, a tulip.

There's only one problem: very few have the olfactory equipment – the nose – to discern this fragrance. To most folks it smells no better than a cauliflower, so it is usually just cast aside. Afterward these sense-deprived folk toddle on like puppets on a clothesline being reeled to the end of the garden.

Perseverance of the saints. A tulip that caused great consternation when first developed.

Because of its longevity, farmers were afraid it would put them out of business. Customers would buy one bouquet and it would last forever. No more sales. Bankruptcy. It turns out, however, that these everlasting flowers are hard to distinguish from the plastic kind. They don't wilt, but they grow dry and brittle as parchment, and when you open a window and a fresh breeze blows in, they crumble into dust.

CC readers, I am sure, will recognize none of these flowers, for they obey the sign that says, "Please don't pick the flowers." They refuse to pluck the TULIPS out of the Scriptural soil that is their proper habitat.

I hope no one will see my tiptoe through the tulips as sacrilegious. The *Canons of Dort* are not sacred, of course. None of the Reformed leaders who formulated them thought they were. They were written by pastors for a pastoral purpose. The Calvinists were sure that the unbiblical theologizing of the Arminians would foster the kind of anxiety and uncertainty that Luther and many others had experienced under Catholicism.

Now the *Canons* themselves often seem to create the same sort of insecurity. Perhaps it is because they have been misread as if they were a chapter in a rationalist theology, a blueprint of God's plans and decisions in eternity. Nevertheless, some uptight Calvinists cannot find themselves anywhere in this picture.

This may be a distorted reading of the *Canons* (I think it is), but as the distance between ourselves and the 17th century widens, the Five Points of Calvinism seem to lend themselves more and more to such misreading. If God's electing love in Christ is the foundation of the church, then to put this truth into better words than the 17th century language of the *Canons* is not to thwart the principle of Reformation but to extend it. After all, even Scripture has been updated more often.

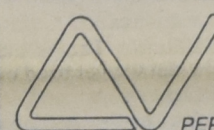
'The five points of Calvinism': Where did they come from?

The *Canons of Dort* is the popular name given to the decisions of the national synod of the Reformed Churches of the Netherlands which met in the city of Dordrecht between 1618 and 1619. Although it was a national synod, delegates from Reformed churches in eight other countries participated in formulating the *Canons*.

The synod was convened to deal with the teachings of Jacob Arminius, a theology professor who questioned the doctrines of Calvinism on several points. Arminius won a number of enthusiastic followers who aggressively promoted his views. The Arminians taught election on the basis of foreseen faith; universal atonement; partial depravity; resistible grace and the possibility of lapsing from grace.

The Synod of Dort rejected each of these five points, which subsequently also became known as "the five points of Calvinism," summed up in the acronym TULIP: total depravity; unconditional election; limited atonement; irresistible grace; and the perseverance of the saints. The *Canons* are part of the doctrinal standards of the CRC as well as most other Reformed churches with roots in the Netherlands.

Information adapted from the Psalter Hymnal, 1987 edition.



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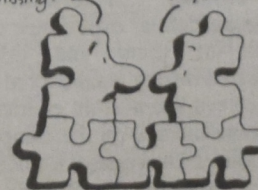
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On Being Reformed

Rome and Reformation: Is what unites greater than what divides?

George Vandervelde

"What unites us is greater than what divides us."

On the one hand, the truth of this statement by Pope John Paul II seems obvious, especially in settings where unbelief is rampant. Just think of the momentous realities which Roman Catholic and Reformed Christians hold in common. Both confess the Apostles' Creed and the Nicene Creed: *I believe, together with you, in God the Father; in his Son, Jesus Christ, crucified, raised from the dead, coming again.* Moreover by confessing these realities together we say something profound about the "together." We cannot believe in one Lord without being placed — like it or not — in one church: We believe in "one holy catholic and apostolic church," the "communion of saints." Clearly, unity trumps division.

But then we bump up against the sad fact of the fractured body. "What divides us seems far greater than what unites us." Leaving aside for the moment the fact that Protestantism has shattered into some 20,000 denominations worldwide, surely the deepest fissure runs between Protestantism and Roman Catholicism.

Going back a ways, I remember that my identity as a Reformed kid lay in not being one of the "Roomse Papen," (Roman Papists), a slur we yelled at the "others." Whatever the Roman Catholics were, we were not;

"The satisfaction of defining one's own faith as light against the dark backdrop of Roman Catholicism gradually made way for the pain of conflict."

whatever they did, we did not do. Did Roman Catholics have a string of given names? I was baptized with the lone "Geert." Did the Catholics have Christmas trees? We had none. Later, as a teenager, I devoured books by Rev. Hegger, a Roman Catholic priest who had "converted" to the Reformed faith. One of his books was entitled *Mother, I Accuse You*. "Mother" in this case was the Roman Catholic Church ("Holy Mother Church").

Another book of his was called *My Path to the Light*. In this title Hegger applied the joyful confession of having turned from paganism to the marvelous light of



Catholic Council Fathers attend a plenary meeting during Vatican II in St. Peter's Basilica in Rome. In the foreground are the 12 cardinals of the presidency.

Christ (1 Peter) to his having turned from the darkness of Rome to the light of Geneva.

These books made a deep impression on me. After all, this was not one of "us" lobbing stones at "them," but one of "them" decrying Roman Catholicism. When I learned that the *Heidelberg Catechism* condemns the Roman Catholic Mass as basically nothing but a denial of the one sacrifice and suffering of Christ and a "condemnable idolatry" (Question and Answer 80), that fit snugly into everything I had learned.

A new understanding

But my learning about, and especially my personal experience of, Roman Catholicism did not stop there. Along the way, I experienced ever more acutely the tension between what unites and what divides. The satisfaction of defining one's own faith as light against the dark backdrop of Roman Catholicism gradually made way for the pain of conflict. The source of this pain was not simply the conflict between Rome and Reformation but between the realization of being one and yet being horribly torn.

Hitting "fast forward," the most existential experience of the clash of unity and division occurred during a sabbatical year, which we spent at an ecumenical institute located on the campus of St. John's University, founded by the Benedictine order in Minnesota. We attended the

Abbey church on campus. The worship services were carefully thought out, the liturgy was rich, the music often soared. Most striking were the Scripture readings. Prepared with meticulous care and delivered with deep respect, these readings conveyed the freshness and power of the living Word.

The celebration of the eucharist seemed a perfect consummation of this worship feast. Gradually I not only understood with my head but felt in my heart John Calvin's yearning for the Lord's Supper. For Calvin this yearning was so strong that he advocated celebrating communion, not simply once a week, but at least once a week.

Here we were: the weekly celebration of the eucharist instilled Calvin's longing — yet division prevented fulfillment. A sense of communion and the breach of communion collided. The Pope's statement wasn't simply turned around. The greater reality of unity intensified the pain of division.

No stranger

One experiences pain not only because Roman Catholicism presents us simply with two-ness, but also with brokenness, with division. Our disunion hurts because of a deep sense of union. We who are Reformed no longer regard the Roman Catholic Church simply as "other," the way we might regard a stranger, whom we

hardly know and with whom we have had no history.

Rather, the two-ness of the Roman Catholic and the Reformation churches is more like a divorce. We have a common history. The division is a breach, the breach a rupture, the rupture a wound. We have a common history because we worship and serve the same Lord. Yet as churches we exist as aliens. It's almost as if we were catapulted backwards into a relation akin to that of Jews and Gentiles in the New Testament era. Division outweighs unity. Yet we know that cannot be: "Is Christ divided?"

Surprising development

What if, all appearances to the contrary, we were to act on what we know to be true: what unites us is greater than what divides us? What if we were not merely to confess but to live the conviction that our differences pale in comparison to our agreement? In some ways that is already happening.

A few years ago a small, fairly conservative Reformed communion in Canada joined an organization founded by predominantly more liberal, mainline denominations. I have in mind, of course, the Christian Reformed Church in Canada joining the Canadian Council of Churches. This was made possible, in part, by the reconstitution of the CCC as a forum of churches.

But I would not be surprised if

another factor played a role: the Roman Catholic Church in Canada joined the CCC at the same time. It is impossible to determine how great a role this simultaneity played. But many Reformed Christians welcomed the theological depth and solidity that bolstered the Canadian Council of Churches by the entry of the Catholic Church.

Roman Catholic membership in the Council had an obvious effect, for example, in the Faith and Witness Commission of the Council, a group in which I have served on behalf of the CRC for many years. Soon after the Catholic Church joined the Council, the Roman Catholic representation was increased by several members. Some of the most substantial contributions to our theological work come from these Catholic brothers and sisters.

Ringing in the new

Another totally unforeseen, but providential, side-effect of the full membership of the Catholic Church in the CCC may be mentioned, though this effect goes far beyond Roman Catholic-Reformed relations.

Soon after the RCC joined the Council, a Roman Catholic leader, Janet Sommerville, was chosen as the General Secretary of the Council. At about the same time, the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada, chose as its new president, Rev. Gary Walsh. I think it is safe to say that the relations between these seemingly distant, frequently alienated institutions has never been as cordial as they are at present.

Janet Sommerville and Gary Walsh have collaborated to launch a project sponsored jointly by the CCC and EFC: "Together 2000: Christians in Canada honoring Jesus." As part of this project, every Christian church in Canada is being asked to ring its bells on January 1, 2000, to celebrate the third millennium of Christianity.

This venture has been described as uniting "one of the broadest coalitions of Christians ever seen in the country." Given the state of Roman Catholic-Evangelical relations in the past, it is joyfully ironic that it is the leadership of this fine Roman Catholic Christian, together with that of an evangelical Methodist bishop, that makes such collaboration possible.

Perhaps the time is not far off that both groups of churches will join in observing the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. This call for prayer for Christian unity was first launched by the

On Being Reformed

Evangelical Alliance of Churches in 1857 but has largely fallen into disuse among evangelical churches. The specific Week of Prayer for Christian Unity is now sponsored by national Councils of Churches, related to the World Council of Churches.

If evangelical churches observe a special time of prayer for unity at all, they do so at a time different from that observed by mainline and Roman Catholic churches. If our unity is greater than our disunity, what could be higher on the list of joint ventures than communal prayer for unity?

A first: CRC/Catholic talks

To return to the smaller picture, another new development in Reformed/Roman Catholic relations demonstrates the awareness of the truth that what unites is greater than what divides. Currently the CRC has entered (for the first time, to my knowledge) into direct conversations with the Roman Catholic Church. The talks concern a very specific issue, none other than the *Heidelberg Catechism's* conclusion that the Roman Catholic Mass is "nothing but a denial of the one sacrifice of Christ and a condemnable idolatry."

After many requests to delete or soften this part of the Catechism,

the 1999 CRC Synod, requested the Interchurch Relations Committee to clarify the current Roman Catholic view of the Mass. Whatever the outcome of this initiative, the very fact that it is taking place is a sign of change in the landscape of divided churches.

Rather than simply talking about and polemicizing against the Roman Catholic Church, this tiny Reformed church is speaking directly with the church that is historically its "mother"—about accusing her of what the Old Testament calls prostitution.

In Canada the CRC has worked—either on its own or through the EFC—collaboratively with the Roman Catholic Church, giving testimony in the social, political arena. On issues such as abortion, euthanasia, genetic engineering, conservative Reformed and evangelical churches find themselves far closer to the Roman Catholic Church than to mainline Reformed churches.

Confessing our Lord

While such collaboration is to be lauded, it always raises the question whether churches can stand next to one another in the public arena without speaking together in the church arena. Surely a joint protest by churches against the wanton abortion of fetuses is more than merely a



Pope John Paul II.

pragmatic alliance. Rather it is a protest in the name of *our* Lord.

But how can we protest together in the name of that common Lord, without speaking together about that name? Can we face the world together and avoid facing each other? Facing each other in order to work towards making evident that that which unites is indeed greater than that which divides.

Such work is happening at a surprising level. For some seven years, an ongoing consultation has been taking place between the World Evangelical Fellowship and

the Roman Catholic Church. We will be meeting for the third time early in the second week of November to discuss the meaning of "communion" and of "evangelization." That these consultations are taking place at all is surprising, because, by and large, evangelicals display an abiding antipathy towards Roman Catholicism.

That these consultations are nevertheless taking place must largely be attributed to the tireless efforts of a well known Reformed leader, Dr. Paul Schrottenboer, who died a little over a year ago. In

these consultations Roman Catholic and evangelical representatives from various parts of the globe sit around the table for an entire week, living and breathing the clash between, on the one hand, the joy-filled knowledge that what unites them plumbs depths that lie deeper than the fissures that divide and, on the other, the painful realization that—before us and, more importantly, before the world—the fissures that divide loom larger than the bonds that unite.

The strange and painful contradiction between unity and division compels us to trust that in his intercession for his church, Christ continues the prayer he uttered shortly before his death (John 17). We can begin and sustain our work for the unity of the church in no better way than to join in Christ's prayer: *May they be one, as we are one, that the world may believe that you have sent me.*

George Vandervelde is a senior member in systematic theology at the Institute for Christian Studies and serves as convener of the World Evangelical Task Force on Ecumenical Issues, which is engaged in an ongoing dialogue with the Roman Catholic Church. He also serves on the Faith and Order Commission in the U.S.A. and on the Faith and Witness Commission in Canada. He is a member of the Willowdale Christian Reformed Church.

Report clarifies views of Scripture held by Baptists, Catholics

James Dotson

ALPHARETTA, Ga. (BP)—Five years of study by a joint panel of Southern Baptists and Roman Catholics has found that while both groups share a deep appreciation for Scripture, they hold vastly different beliefs on foundational issues of the Bible's nature, authority and role in the Christian faith.

A report released in September details the findings of the five-year conversation regarding Scripture between eight Southern Baptist leaders (under the auspices of the North American Mission Board's interfaith evangelism team) and eight representatives of the (American) National Conference of Catholic Bishops.

Baptist Phil Roberts, former interfaith evangelism director and leader of the Southern Baptist delegation to the conversations, said the goal of the talks from the Southern Baptist perspective was simply to help Southern Baptists and Catholics understand each

other better.

"The idea was for us to understand some of the nuanced uses of the Bible and their variant position on the authority of Scripture, so that we can both appreciate and differentiate how Catholics use the Bible versus how Southern Baptists use the Bible," Roberts said.

The group met at both Roman Catholic and Southern Baptist institutions, sharing their different perspectives and studying a variety of theological documents from both traditions.

The report is based largely on outlining the different definitions Southern Baptists and Roman Catholics apply to such terms as "revelation," "Word of God," "inspiration," "inerrancy," "infallibility" and "canon."

Baptist view

"Revelation" to Southern Baptists, for instance, refers primarily to the written revelation of Scripture. Roman Catholics,

meanwhile, point to Jesus Christ as the revelation of God, with both Scripture and church tradition bearing witness to that revelation.

"Words mean different things to different people, and never is that more true than in the theological realm," said Roberts, who is also currently vice president for strategic cities strategies at NAMB. "When I say 'theological authority,' I mean the Bible. When a Catholic says 'theological authority,' he is thinking of the Bible as interpreted by the [Roman Catholic] church and by tradition. And that's why when we deal with these words and these issues we really need some clarification."

But while differences in the infallibility of the Scriptures and infallibility of the church and its leaders have been well understood, Roberts said one of the areas where he saw a growing gulf between the groups was in basic scriptural interpretation. Over the past 50 years, he believes, the Roman

Catholic Church has come to increasingly embrace the historical-critical method of scriptural interpretation, while Southern Baptists are more literal in their approach. The method looks to various sources to discover the meaning of Scripture, and does not assume the kind of biblical "inerrancy" that Baptists do.

Amicable disagreements

Paige Patterson, president of the Southern Baptist Convention and another member of the panel, said the report should help Southern Baptists interpret Roman Catholic statements more effectively in any future discussions. She adds, "One thing that I think has become crystal clear in the process of the dialogue is that no ecumenical hopes would be in order."

She notes, however, that the conversations did demonstrate that "it is possible for people working from rather radically different conclusions to sit down together in

a hospitable and charitable way and learn from one another."

"While being more convinced than ever before that the divide between us is unbridgeable short of a major change in the doctrine of one group or the other, it remains possible to learn from one another and to discuss our understandings of truth without resorting to either Catholic-bashing or Baptist-bashing," Patterson concludes.

Roberts said that while other conversations between Southern Baptists and Catholics have taken place in the past, the conversations on the nature of Scripture were the first to include key conservative leaders in the convention. As such, he said they reflected a new approach to the process and issues involved.

Areas to be tackled in future discussions include salvation, evangelism and mission, and religious liberty, although a timetable for those discussions has not yet been developed.

On Being Reformed

Quo vadis, Ecclesia? Or: An example of how we've left Calvin behind

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"Suppose Calvin were to reappear in our time. Would his views and actions make many friends with those who now call themselves Calvinists?" (An engraving of John Calvin by Conguy)

Bert den Boggende

Probably not many Reformed people of various stripes watched the movie *Quo Vadis* when it appeared in 1951. Even if I had had the patience to watch the nearly three-hour film, and had not been too young, I still would not have been allowed to see it. In the 1920s, Baptists, Reformed and Roman Catholics, among others, strongly spoke out against movies. Rather than engaging Hollywood, as *Christian Courier* currently does, the Christian Reformed Church distanced itself from this then still reasonably novel means of communication, art and entertainment.

Quo vadis could be regarded as something of a metaphor for the church's direction throughout history. In the film, with Nero stirring up serious problems for Christians in Rome, the Apostle Peter decides to leave the city. He doesn't get too far before encountering Christ going towards Rome. A surprised Peter asks, "Quo vadis, Domine?" ("Where are you going, Lord?"). Peter and Christ are obviously going in opposite directions.

Throughout history there have been voices suggesting that the church, like Peter, was going in the

wrong direction. John Calvin was one of those voices. For a glimpse into some church history during Calvin's time, read his diatribe against the Romanization of the Western church in his famous *Institutes of the Christian Religion*. His strong language, though not untypical of the time, did not make him friends with any of the popes.

Strong language

Suppose Calvin were to reappear in our time. Would his views and actions make many friends with those who now call themselves Calvinists? Would he accept movies? He condemned playing cards and dancing as "worldly" activities.

Could *Christian Courier's* former editor, Bert Witvoet, with his openly acknowledged interest in ballroom dancing still be Calvin's friend?

Sorry, Bert, you may as well prepare yourself for an unpleasant appearance before the church consistory (which bodies we now mostly call councils). With Calvin's negative views on worldly pleasures – would he allow even our innocuous board games, or are they all games of chance? – we should not have been

surprised if he had condemned film.

Sorry, Marian Van Til, you might face excommunication for your film reviews. Having written some articles on film for *Christian Schools International's Media Studies*, I too would be in trouble. All of you who have merely watched movies but have not led others astray will probably face a reprimand.

Seriously serious!

What about such activities as sport? In spite of Calvinist-sounding comments, *Christian Courier* sports columnist Tim Antonides's deep love for the Vancouver Canucks would not endear him to Calvin! Forget it, all you adherents to worldly pleasures, how do you dare to call yourselves Calvinists?

And we who make so much of Christmas – yes, even those of you who still substitute St. Nicholas for the unseemly North American merchandization of the feast, we too, need to question our Calvinism.

Are there any Calvinists left? Of course, there are! And we are serious people, the vast majority of us who are Reformed. You want solid, scientific proof? Consider this: Having grown up in the Netherlands, I was struck by one aspect of the Reformed community there. Jewish, Roman Catholic, liberal, socialist entertainers could all poke fun at themselves and their respective communities, but there were no Calvinist entertainers; not a one.

The only possible conclusion is that we Calvinists are serious people. We seriously battle about ordaining women, evolution (and seriously confuse it with evolutionism), the number of times Communion should be celebrated, and a whole lot of other issues – and if we don't get it our way, we seriously separate.

Diverging from Calvin's views

Imagine for a moment that John Calvin were to visit a Christian Reformed Church council meeting, or a congregational meeting. Imagine that you could ask him about how often he thought the Lord's Supper should be celebrated.

Unquestionably, you hesitate for a moment. Should you address him as "Brother John" or as "Mr. Calvin"? Knowing that Europeans hold on to some kind of ranking system – egalitarianism is good enough for us North Americans and for Australians – you'll

probably decide on "Mr. Calvin."

You: "Well, uh, Mr. Calvin, what do you think? Should we stick to, uh, our tradition?"

Calvin: "What do you mean?"

You: "Well, uh... you know... four times a year."

Calvin: "I see what you mean, but that's not what I had in mind."

You: "I don't understand. Didn't you start that tradition?"

Calvin: "Not I. I thought that Rome had it right on that point, and that every Sunday the Lord's Supper should be celebrated."

You: "You did? I can't believe it! How then did we come to celebrate it only four times a year? Mind you, Roman Catholics often seem to participate so frivolously that I'm kind of glad we have it only a few times, and then with great solemnity."

Calvin: "If you read my *Institutes* – the English version should do if you can't read French or Latin – you'll notice that I try very hard not to separate Word and sacrament. We are not more worthy if hearing the Word than of celebrating the sacrament. Besides it's not so much a medieval

man Catholic hymn "O magnum mysterium" (my favorite setting is that of the Spanish Renaissance composer Tomas Luis de Victoria), but I'm sure he would have encouraged the contemplation of that *mysterium*.

When I was about 12, a minister in my congregation in the Netherlands preached against Pentecostals, positing that it was presumptuous to speak in tongues, and comparing that to the biblical Pentecostal event. As far as he was concerned, the Holy Spirit had restricted the speaking of tongues to that one occasion. With such a narrow view of the working of the Holy Spirit there is not much place for mystery. Slowly we seem to be moving away from that confined view. I imagine Calvin appreciatively saying, "Way to go!"

By now you get the picture (sorry, no pictures in church, although texts of the Ten Commandments would be acceptable!). Calvin would not feel at home with many of the daily or common activities of contemporary Reformed people. He went one way, and we haven't always followed. *Quo*

The only possible conclusion is that we Calvinists are serious people. We seriously battle about ordaining women, evolution, the number of times the Communion should be celebrated and a whole lot of other issues.

Catholic tradition as an early church tradition. *Ad fontes!* Sorry, you moderns usually don't learn Latin anymore, I understand. 'Back to the sources,' if you get my drift."

You: "But why, then, did we end up having Communion so seldom? I thought it started in your time."

Calvin: "Simply, my dear, power politics! In my time, church consistories consisted mainly of town councillors. Talking about mixing church and state! Your Abraham Kuyper probably saw that particular problem better than I did, but that's another discussion.

"Theologically, my idea was sound, if I may say so – in fact, it still is – but the politicians thought differently. Perhaps you are somewhat surprised that I, cast by opponents as a dictator, submitted to political pressure. It was either that or more trouble, of which I had already more than enough."

Those familiar with Calvin's *Institutes* know that, while early in that work Calvin writes about the mystery of God, most of the book is rather cerebral. I am not sure how wholeheartedly he would have agreed with that beautiful Ro-

vadis, ecclesia?

In other respects Calvin opened up ways which his successors closed, and which we have begun to rediscover. He would feel quite at home with some of our "new" ways. In the light of his views on the English situation during Henry VIII's reign, I could imagine Calvin accepting bishops; I could imagine him not necessarily reading the six days of creation literally, but I'm not sure he would accept ordaining women. *Quo vadis, ecclesia?*

A new millennium is approaching (I'll wait till 2001) and perhaps we wonder where the church is going. Certainly, present Calvinists differ from those of the 16th century, and if history is any indication, those of the future will differ from those of the present. Not that this should worry us; the Lord knows where his church is going.

May we trust that the Holy Spirit will guide us in the right direction, so that both the church and its leaders all end up at the same destination.

Bert den Boggende is a former teacher who lives in Lacombe, Alberta.

'Pride goeth before a fall'



Oooh... the things a king has to do to stay humble!

Jay Reay

Pride is one of the most problematic of the "deadly sins." We can take an unequivocal stance against avarice or lust, even gluttony, but pride can be positive and useful. We are justly proud of good work. We are proud of our children. We are proud of our country, and such pride is creative. It motivates us to work better, to achieve more, to encourage and support others.

But often we are proud in less worthy ways, comparing our own privileged position with the positions of others. Such destructive pride measures our relative place in an organization or in society, our apparently greater intellect, even the meretricious comparison of possessions: the house, the Gold Card, the new car in the drive, the desirable spouse.

Too like the Pharisees

Christians can be particularly afflicted by pride and its sisters, arrogance, pomposity and intolerance. We may be arrogant about the righteousness of our specific denomination, as if we had a monopoly on God's blessings. We may be pompous about the details of liturgy, the way things are done, the way we comport ourselves in church – and that can be an affliction of the evangelical as much as the traditionalist communities.

The NIV Bible often uses the word "conceited" in place of the King James Version's word "proud" for such cases; in 1 Timothy 6:4, for example, to describe a person who feels his intellect is superior even to God's teachings.

Such conceit is not only shallow, it's destructive.

The pride engendered by place, status and position is very common amongst political and religious leaders, and this gives me a problem with my relationship to my church. The Pharisees were conceited about their interpretative guardianship of God's Word, and about their exalted position in society which enabled them to impose their interpretation of the Word into punitive Law. Jesus crossed them at every turn because he could not stomach their pride, for their pride turned them into blind guides.

Today, in all kinds of church communities – even our own, no doubt – we still see political finagling by proud leaders as Machiavellian as the powerful Pharisees of Judaic Jerusalem and the puffed-up prelates of medieval Rome. In 1 Timothy 6:4 we see that the proud and misguided person "has an unhealthy interest in controversies." Nothing changes. But the proud sow the seeds of their own destruction, and we find this satisfying, even entertaining.

Pomposity deflated

We say that pride goes before a fall (in fact, this is a conflation of "Pride goes before destruction and a haughty spirit before a fall" (Prov. 16:18), and we enjoy seeing hubris humbled. In a Chaplin movie the arrogant tail-coated plutocrat in a silk top-hat slips on a banana peel and we laugh. If it were a poor widow slipping on a banana skin, we wouldn't. For her we feel compassion, for him we feel the satisfaction of seeing a proud man

get his comeuppance.

A custard pie in the bleak face of a haughty maitre d' is funny; thrown at a hapless busboy it is mere gratuitous slapstick. The joke works because we see pomposity deflated.

The muscle-bound youth posing in front of the girls at the beach is laughable when a big wave knocks him off the board; it isn't funny when it's just an ordinary guy enjoying the surf.

Pride is a problem for everyone. It affects those with whom the proud person works and lives, and affects the proud themselves. My father was a proud man in the sense of obstinacy, intellectual arrogance, being impatient with incompetence and dismissive of authority – traits I have inherited in full measure – and it led him into trouble and discord of one kind or another all his life.

Pride in one's own capacity to get through life gets in the way of better things. It prevents us from accepting friendship, help, love. And above all, it may alienate us from God.

Intellectual arrogance is also destructive. It inhibits our acceptance of another's point of view. It reinforces our prejudices. It narrows the arteries of growth. My kin also have what Tennyson called "false pride in blood and place." In today's world the pomp of our ancestors is of absolutely no relevance at all. Yet we in my family still faithfully plot our lineage over 800 years, proud of our Norwegian and Scottish forebears, whose exploits and character may have been exotic, but of dubious value to their society at the time, let alone now.

This "came-over-with-the-conqueror" pride in ancient name, inherited rank and social status is still common, in Europe, Japan and India as much as in Britain. North Americans are not devoid of it either, although it might be manifested in other ways.

Fastest route to the bottom

Examples of my own pride and my ensuing comeuppance are too numerous to cover here, but one will show how pride can be self-defeating. A few years ago my family and I were on holiday at a remote cottage on Exmoor, in England's beautiful West Country. The summer was long and hot, like this year, one of the droughts we get here from time to time. Having booked lunch at one of our favorite pubs one morning, and running late as usual, I plotted the shortest route across the moor on minor roads and tracks.

Now, it may be a genetic imprint from my seafaring Viking ancestors, or it may be a relic from my brief time as a Navy officer, but I am good at map reading and I am quite proud of my never-failing ability to find the prettiest routes to get from A to B.

I planned to take us through Tart Steps on the River Barle, with its vehicle ford clearly marked on the map. We passed several "ford" road signs on the winding, tree-arched lane down to the valley

and alongside the purling river to the beauty-spot itself, packed with holiday makers enjoying the stunning Somerset countryside in the sparkling sun. Due to the drought, the river was low and the ramp through the ford was clearly visible. Cars were parked on each side and seemingly hundreds of children sat on the flat stones of the ancient footbridge, as if waiting for some entertainment to begin.

The Barle is wide at this point; but being shallow there, it runs fast. My wife suggested we turn round and go back up the long lane to the main road but I just got irritated at her apparent criticism of my superb route-plotting and engaged first gear. We entered the ford and – you guessed it – the river came straight over the hood and started to seep in through the doors.

When the current started to pull us off the concrete a nightmare flashed into my mind: we would drift down river and out to sea and they would find us, months later perhaps, four skeletons in a rusting hulk, my bony fingers pointing to the map and my whitening skull forever mouthing the fatal word "ford."

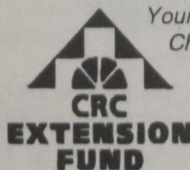
Somehow I managed to back out from the huge submerged hole in the concrete ramp. I was red in the face from anger, fright and punctured pride. The children on the footbridge cheered – the funniest one they'd seen all morning, they said.



Jay Reay is a member of the Church of England and a knowledge management consultant who lives near Oxford, England.

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Faith without works is dead: *A parable*

Marten A. Mol

His name is Willem. He has wild hair, wears a T-shirt, jeans, no shoes. He has a brilliant mind, and he became a Christian while attending college. Down the street from the college is a well-dressed and conservative church. The members come in knowing the liturgy and what to expect.

The church wants to develop a ministry to students, but is not sure how to go about it. One day Willem decides to worship there. He walks in on a glorious Sunday morning in his typical "uniform."

The church is full, the service has begun. Willem slowly walks down the long aisle looking for a seat. By now the members are watching, following as he continues his journey to the front.

Hearts and eyes are completely upon him. Many people are beginning to feel a bit uncomfortable. No one says anything or moves. Willem gets closer and closer to the front and realizes there are no seats. So he simply sits down, where he is, on the floor.

Although perfectly acceptable behavior at a college fellowship, this had never before happened in this church (or in most churches). There is tension in the air. About the same time, the minister realizes that from the back of the church, an elder is making his way toward Willem.

The elder is in his late 60s, silver-haired, dressed in a perfectly fitted, perfectly pressed suit. A godly man—and elegant, dignified, well-respected. He walks slowly, because his right leg is sore. As he makes his way forward, the church is absolutely silent. No one will blame the elder for what he is about to do. No one expects this well-established senior man in the church to understand this person now sitting in that unfamiliar place on the floor.

It takes what seems like eternity for the elder to reach the young man. All eyes are focused front. No one seems to be breathing. The minister waits, too, anticipating.

The elder stops beside Willem. Then he slowly lowers his body down to the floor and sits next to young man. He whispers, "Let's worship here."

The congregation expels a collective breath; many choke with emotion. When the minister gains control of his own emotions, he says, "What I'm about to preach, you may never remember. What you have just seen, you will never forget. Be careful how you live. You may be the only Bible some people will ever read."

Marten A. Mol is a member of Bethel Christian Reformed Church, Waterdown, Ont., owns a business consultancy and travel agency. This story was forwarded to him by his daughter.

Comment

Finding a home in your church

Dear Elizabeth,

Since we started this column, I've used it to do a number of things, including criticize the Christian community. A few months ago, I took a shot at my old high school. In the future, I might discuss why I haven't "done profession of faith." I don't think there's anything inherently wrong with criticizing the Christian world, and I don't lose sleep over it. Every community needs its watchdogs to howl at the wolves and, on occasion, to snap at those they are trying to protect. It's *how* the dogs do it that counts.

Over the last few weeks, though, I've been feeling more grateful to the Christian community I left back home. After two years in Korea, I am able to see more clearly just how good I had it in Canada. No, I'm not talking about material things; I'm talking about religion. Simply put, there isn't much to compare between the Reformed Christianity you'll find in Canada and the brand of it you'll find here in Korea.

You're probably wondering what I'm getting at, right? Well, in many parts of Korea, Christianity isn't the biblical Christianity we know. It's a hybrid mix of Christian thought and Confucian ideology. The hierarchies which are integral to Confucian thought (i.e., power is absolute, disobedience of any kind is condemnable, women are greatly inferior to men) are meshed together with certain Christian notions and biblical teachings.

What you get as a result is quite a strange amalgam. In certain churches, the minister is a demi-god who controls everything under him (always *him*). Sometimes this demi-god status is evident in the high-class lifestyle he is allowed to live. He may own everything from a pair of luxury cars to an office decked out in gold-trimmed leather seats, to the right to "hand down" the church to his son once he retires. That's right!

Sometimes a church will spring for the cost for the heir-in-waiting (a son or a son-in-law) to head off to North America or elsewhere to get an M.Div.

Elders rule over the districts with an iron-fist while the "laypeople" struggle to climb up whatever ladders are available to them. In many Korean churches, the people's faith is works-oriented. I've even heard of churches which publish reports on who-gave-how-much in the offering plate. Yesterday, I was told by a few professors that certain Korean Christian leaders consider themselves exempt from particular biblical teachings about servanthood, including what you'd read in something like Philippians 2 (being like Christ). I don't attend a Korean church service, so I don't witness much of this first-hand. Still, I see it in what my own Christian university students write in their essays. I sense it in the Christian literature I read and in the way certain Koreans talk to me.

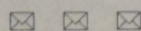
Last year, a distinguished Australian pastor/academic spent four months at our university. Every Sunday he was chaperoned from one church to the next. It's fair to say he wasn't happy with the pietism he saw. At the Christian university where I teach, there's only one important major: theology. English? Forget it. Child Studies? Get a life. To be a "man of God" means you've enrolled in the theology department with the full financial backing of your church. A recently published article about the school stated that the entire curriculum revolves around preparing the pre-sem students for seminary. It virtually ignored all other disciplines. Whenever I watch a prayer service in the chapel I feel like I'm at the Prayer Olympics – each person is trying to out-do each other. It's a scream-fest which comes to a screeching halt the moment the leader puts up his hands. The institutional church has so much power over the students' lives that students expect to be exempted from class or class assignments if certain church work has to be done at the same time. True Reformed theology (which states that the New Earth will be a place on which human beings will walk and talk) is considered by many to be suspect. Heaven's the place you're gonna be.

Sure, I'm aware of the culture question. And I know that Protestant Christianity is quite new to Korea (relatively speaking). But I still feel that my emotional responses are legitimate. What do I make of all these realities I've just mentioned? Well, I consider them part of my own cultural experience.

They're interesting, and sometimes they make me laugh. And they've helped me realize that I owe a big thanks to a lot of people back home: to my parents, to those who struggled to set up Christian schools and organizations, to elders who came to visit (not preach), and to underpaid college professors and other die-hard Kuyperians who could be elsewhere but choose teach at Christian schools for the opportunity to tell young kids about a certain vision.

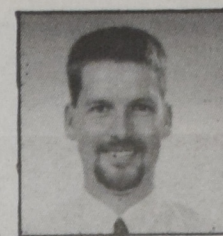
I still don't know where I'm going to end up, Elizabeth. I love Korea and I love the life I have out here. Sometimes I think I might stay out here until I retire. But on a night like tonight, I know that – and not just physically – I am miles and miles away from where I came from.

Dirk



Elizabeth Salomons
egs@smartt.com

Two
Under
35



Dirk Schouten
dbschouten@netscape.net

Dear Dirk,

I've been waiting for this topic to come up. In fact, I thought of starting the discussion myself several times, but haven't had the courage. The truth is, Dirk, you've hit on something I struggle with constantly.

Like you, I'm pretty cynical and frustrated with the Reformed community in which I've grown up. Ever since I was a little girl I've watched my denomination (and yours) argue till the cows come home about the role of women – *my* gender – in the institutional church. It's tough, as a young person, to develop a spiritual identity when all you hear are grownups with theological arguments reducing that identity to biology.

Now that that hurdle is past we're headed straight for the next one: homosexuality. I have many dear friends who've been denied a safe spiritual community because of their sexual orientation and who've therefore left their Reformed church at the very point they needed it most. The thought of 20 years of "theological" debate on this issue makes my stomach tie up in knots. I don't have it in me.

Finally, by growing up in a parsonage I've seen firsthand the emotional and physical costs of giving your all to the Reformed community. The things I've seen have left big scars I'm still dealing with. And I experienced all of this in a community that was never quite "home."

As a pastor's family, you're constantly aware – or reminded by others – that you're just passing through, and the isolation that creates at such a young age never leaves you. In a sense I've been looking for a church home all my adult life when I don't even know what "home" means. At the same time, when I left my parental home for the first time at age 18, I was so glad to be worshipping in a big urban church where nobody knew me. That anonymity was such freedom.

I've been thinking a lot about these things the last year. The fact is, I've been in Vancouver a year and I've yet to start looking for a new church home. I'm exhausted from all the politics and in-fighting of the denomination I grew up in, and I need a break.

When I was asked to let my name stand as an elder nominee in my last congregation, I refused. I had a host of reasons, but the most significant one – the most honest one – is that I feel my church (denomination) has taken from me all that I have to give.

Having said all this, I also have experienced first-hand the powerful support a church community can provide. I stood with my family at my mother's grave-side surrounded by a sea of strangers – the new congregation my parents had just taken up work in – and found great comfort in the love they offered to me and my family. I also watched that same congregation take in my brother and father and care for them in ways that I – being a plane flight away – couldn't. My brother has turned into an amazing young man in large part because of that community, and for that I will always be thankful.

Like you, Dirk, I'm not quite sure of where I'm going to end up. The Christian Reformed Church is my home and my family, and that will never change. I will always be Reformed. But sometimes you have to leave home to realize what you have.

It sounds like that's the stage you're at, way over there on the other side of the planet. It's a stage I haven't yet reached. When I sit in that pew on Sunday morning, I need to know why I'm there. Somehow I've lost that somewhere along my journey. But hearing you talk about the gratitude you feel for this faith community that I struggle with, and in, gives me hope that someday I'll find my way home.

Elizabeth

News Comment

Nose for News



Bert Hielema

AN APPLE A DAY keeps the doctor away, and an onion a day keeps everybody away. But it is recommended that we eat onions anyway. It has been discovered that an onion a day keeps osteoporosis away. The current issue of *Nature* reports that when male rats were fed one gram of dry onion daily, the process which releases the calcium stored in the bones is reduced by 20 per cent. This was higher than the effect of a drug called calcitonin. Because the weakening of bones happens most often in postmenopausal women, researchers did the same experiment on female rats with their ovaries removed, and noticed a 32 per cent higher result. Conclusion: in addition to a moderate intake of dairy products our diet should include a good mix of vegetables, including a liberal portion of onion.

YES, THERE IS A difference in the way men and women react to circumstances. The French say, "Vive La Difference," and I fully underwrite that. Lately, this difference has become more pronounced. Here's why. For women,

the past decade has been a period of immense gains in the job market. There are more women working than ever before, their average earnings are up, they hold on to their jobs longer, and the positions they hold tend to be more senior and require more skills.

And what about men? Men have been having a bad time of late, particularly those with little or no post-secondary education. The problem is the difference between men and women. Let me explain. In a new book called *Stiffed: The Betrayal of the American Man*, Susan Faludi, the author, narrates how she travelled in search of men, from those formerly employed in shipyards to Vietnam vets, from Promise Keepers to militia men, in support of her thesis that our culture has betrayed them.

Men of the post-war generation, she argues, have been deprived by economics and social change of the fundamental, affirming roles their fathers had. Her book counts 662 pages, and if its weight is any indication of male problems, we men are in deep trouble indeed.

According to Faludi, men feel

abandoned by their fathers, who were ghosts in their lives. They were never taught what it was to be a man and stranded their sons in an image-based, commercial-ruled world which oppresses them. Honest men of yesteryear in traditionally typically male occupations, such as farming, logging, factory work, ship-building, even ditch digging, had it much better. They lived in a society of utility which defined manhood by physical strength, character, stoicism, integrity, reliability and the desire to protect, provide and pontificate.

Today all this has gone up in smoke. The main trouble now with men, says Faludi, is that they can think of only one thing at a time because their brains are linear and sequential. That's fine if you have a straightforward construction project, but, here comes *la difference*: women's brains seemed to be better suited to the modern, networked, fluid, fast-changing global economy. When was the last time men had it good? Susan Faludi thinks it was during the Second World War, when men strode into battle with a common sense of purpose, and nourished themselves on comradeship in the trenches.

THIS REMINDS ME of George W. Bush, son of the former U.S. President and the Republican front-runner in the year 2000 presidential race. Bush, now governor of Texas, where he has allowed a record number of prisoners to be executed, recently made a major policy speech on defence. His views have to be taken seriously, for they may affect us all. And they are deeply worrying. Bush is reviving the policies of fear. He spoke of "a world of terror and missiles and madmen," from which he would protect the American people. To this end he promised to build a national anti-ballistic missile defence and spend an additional \$20 billion on new weapon systems. He condemned the "peacekeeping roles" of the U.S. army and pledged: "My simple message for countries like China and Russia is that threats against the U.S. would provoke a devastating response."

That's scary stuff, appealing to the worst in male linear thinking. What the world needs is more U.S. engagement, not less. We don't need more smart bombs, more Rwandas, more selfish super-power posturing. In a shrinking, more female-oriented world, the

best defence is global, achieved through regional alliances, sustainable economic advance and a stronger United Nations.

BACK TO THE MALE business. Last month I attended a seminar in the Luther Seminary, St. Paul, Minnesota (an institution run by the conservative Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod). The school of theology was only a few steps from our daughter's dwelling in that city and I was attracted to the title of the lecture series: "Worship and the New Creation."

My first clue to what was not going to happen came when in the morning devotions the speaker singled out Mark's version of the parable of the Sower, rather than the Romans 8 passage about creation being in pains of birth, longing to be set free, which had been cited in the program.

Neither of the two speakers ever mentioned the New Creation. When I questioned this, the answer was: I did not choose the title. The main thrust of the principal speaker was that we must return to the awe and veneration former generations displayed in religious services: worshipful silence, respectful listening to a vested minister/priest (who, it was not said, but somehow, it seemed to me, implied, ought to be male).

I agreed when it was said that worship is an encounter with the living and true God. However, it was assumed by the mostly male Lutheran ministers that this could take place only in the church with its dignified music, such as Bach cantatas, fine singing and organ playing. Here again a throwback to the old and trusted male way of doing things.

ONE EXCELLENT outcome of the day spent there was that I bought a couple of books at the well-stocked Augsburg-Fortress store. One of them was a 600-page tome on Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *A Testament to Freedom*. It contains the essential writings of the German pastor and theologian who joined the Resistance against Hitler and was hanged a few weeks prior to the end of WWII. I wished I had read it before the conference. Here is a line from Bonhoeffer's essay, *Dein Reich Komme* ("Your Kingdom Come"), which he presented as a lecturer at the University of Berlin in 1932, at the age of 26: "We are secular - ever since we hit upon the devious trick of being re-

ligious, yes, even 'Christian' at the expense of the earth." Now that is language that speaks to my heart.

In that lecture Bonhoeffer also said that "Christianity was neither an archaic replica of the heavenly world nor a cluster of sacred shrines and hallowed sanctuaries, magic escape routes for earthly turmoil. Rather, the Christian is to live faith as much in the marketplace and factory as at church altars. Faith is thus to be embedded in the way each Christian becomes strong in her or his service of earth and its peoples.... Christ does not lead us in a religious flight from this world to other worlds beyond; rather he gives us back to the earth as loyal children.... God, brother and sister and the earth belong together. The earth nurtures us and holds us, without which we cease to be."

In another essay he says that Christ has become human so that people should be like him, God's image, just as we are. "Through community and communion with the Incarnate Lord, we recover our humanity."

THIS PAST MONTH the United Nations published a report on the Global Environmental Outlook 2000, which says that "the rate at which human activity is damaging the planet has accelerated, and is set to accelerate further. Unless there is an unprecedented commitment of resources and political will, hundreds of millions of people will be condemned to suffering and the environment which our children and grandchildren inherit will be ruinously impoverished."

Just imagine: from 1960 to the present, a mere 40 years, the world's human population has doubled; tripled since I was born in 1928. Writes Dr John Gray, professor of European thought at the London School of Economics: "At the same time we are in the midst of an un-creation, the greatest species extinction of geological history. Only if there is a shift in economic philosophy and policy on a massive scale in the world's richest countries can ecological catastrophe be averted." Away with male thinking. Embrace your female, nurturing side.

Bert Hielema lives in Tweed, Ont., where he tries to become the change he wants to see in the world.

A Battle for Righteousness



The Message of the Book of Job

by Prof. Dr. K.L. Popma, trans. by Jack Van Meggelen

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Dr. Eugene H. Peterson, Prof. Emeritus, Regent College, Vancouver, BC

Advice

Devoured by the green-eyed monster

Dear P & M:

I am a single male with a problem that has ruined every relationship I have ever been in: extreme jealousy. My current girlfriend wants out of our relationship because she does not like the person she is becoming because of my jealous behavior. For example, I have asked her to get rid of old correspondence from old boyfriends and to stop talking to them on the phone. I try to control what she wears, even going so far as to buy her a one piece swimsuit which she says is "just not her." I quiz her about where she has been and with whom she has spoken. I say things like, "Those shorts are too short. Who was that on the phone? Why were you talking to him? Where have you been? What took you so long?" In response she tells me that she doesn't like the person she is becoming because of my behavior. As a result, I am beginning to hate myself.

Although my siblings don't have this problem, I do believe that it is genetic, since both of my parents were also jealous and ended up divorcing when I was in my mid-teens. I have probably also been influenced by the fact that I have worked with many people who are unfaithful in their marriages, leading me to conclude that faithfulness is very rare.

Recently I spent quite a bit of money on therapy, only to be told, "Yes, you have a problem." Since we were getting nowhere, I quit. I know I need help. I also know that I might spend the rest of my life alone if I don't get help. Is there any hope for me?

Dear Green-Eyed Monster:

Jealousy is a green-eyed monster which always destroys what it wants. You have discovered that yourself, again and again.

Controlling behavior is usually rooted in fear and insecurity. In your case, you fear losing your girlfriend to another person. So you try to lock her in with suspicious questions and rigid rules designed to keep others from enjoying her company or admiring her attributes. The result? She feels like a prisoner and you act like a warden. No wonder she wants out of the relationship. No wonder you hate what you do to her.

All of us need to learn that fearful behavior tends to be self-fulfilling. It works like this: you fear losing your girlfriend; you behave fearfully; your forceful behavior pushes her away and your

Peter and Marja



are IN

worst fears become reality. By the way, this is also a problem for many over-controlling parents who can't let their children go.

The ability to trust is learned or lost in our earliest years. The atmosphere of impending divorce in your family in your younger years, and the actual divorce in your mid-teens, probably damaged that innate God-given ability to trust. How sad for you. How sad for every young woman who came to know you as a distrustful person. But at least you now know that it is this ability to trust which needs to be healed. Any future work with a counsellor should focus on that.

Seeing a counsellor was a very good decision because there is certainly hope for you. You now seem to understand the connection between your parents' unfaithfulness and your distrust. What's more, you know you need help. We wish this counsellor could have helped you more. But don't give up on counselling. Sometimes we have to look around for someone with whom we click, or who knows where to focus.

Our starting point for healing is the love of God. Our starting point for regaining the ability to trust is the faithfulness of God. Have you noticed how God never forces but always invites? Jesus, also, gives us the freedom to choose, desiring that we will choose for him, knowing that we may well reject him. It reminds us of the old example of the child who found a bird and put it in a cage. "Let it go!" he was told. "If it returns to you, it was meant to be yours. If it doesn't, it was not."

You have tried forcing love. You learned that it doesn't work. You have tried operating out of distrust. This has backfired again and again. It's time to try the love that lets go and fully trusts the other. It's known as the "perfect love that casts out all fear" (1 John 4:18) and you will find it poetically described in 1 Corinthians 13. The recipients and givers of that kind of love and trust will never feel caged in.

Write to: P & M, 16 Kimberrmount Drive, St. Catharines, ON L2N 5V6.

Peter and Marja Slofstra are a pastor and wife team who live in St. Catharines, Ont.

Send your questions to Peter and Marja. Confidentiality is assured.

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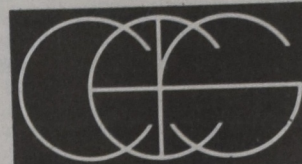
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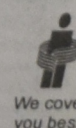
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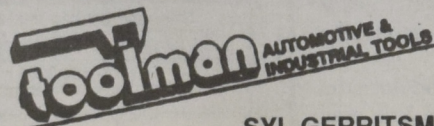
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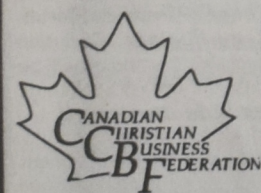


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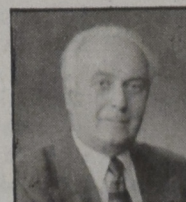
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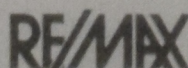
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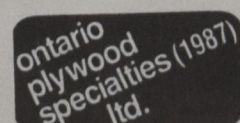
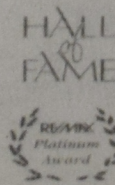
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OCTOBER 18, 1999

Classifieds

Classified Rates	Births	Obituaries	Obituaries	For Sale
<p>As of May 1999: Note: 7% GST will be added to all prices listed below.</p> <p>DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSION <i>Christian Courier</i> is published on alternate Mondays. Copy deadline for each issue is 8:30 a.m. Wednesday, eight business days prior to publication.</p> <p>RATES The cost of advertising space is \$14.00 per column inch (pci) of length. (All columns are 2 inches wide.) This rate applies to all personal and family announcements as well as all other types of advertising, including multi-column display ads. Clients will be invoiced after publication.</p> <p>PHOTOS There is a processing fee of \$25 for the inclusion of a photograph with a personal or family announcement. Photo space is not charged pci, but we reserve the right to determine published photo size. Please note that we cannot use a faxed photo. We need either an original (which we will return) or a downloadable internet image.</p> <p>PERSONAL ADS <i>Christian Courier</i> would be pleased to handle your personal ad in an efficient and discreet manner. The cost to set up a personal file under a unique file number is \$35. Ads requesting correspondence with this file are run at \$15 per insertion. All correspondence is immediately forwarded unopened.</p> <p>NEWLYWEDS & NEW PARENTS We offer a \$25 one-year subscription to couples whose wedding is announced in <i>Christian Courier</i> AND to parents who announce the birth of a child in our paper. Please let us know when placing your ad that you want to take advantage of this offer.</p> <p>SUBMITTING YOUR AD mail: <i>Christian Courier</i> #4 - 261 Martindale Road St. Catharines, ON L2W 1A1 fax: 905-682-8313 email: ccadpromo@aol.com</p> <p>OTHER INFORMATION a) <i>Christian Courier</i> reserves the right to print classifieds using our usual format. b) Please provide us with clear copy. <i>Christian Courier</i> is not responsible for any errors due to hand written or phoned-in advertisements.</p>	<p>WIERSMA: Ronald, Sonia and Nicholas thank God for the safe arrival of our second child and little brother, DUSTIN JAROD born Sept.15, 1999, at 3.52 p.m., weighing 8 lbs. 10 ozs. Proud grandparents are Durk & Thea Buma (fourth grandson) and Elco & Ann Wiersma (seventh grandchild).</p> <p>Weddings Johan and Hilda Tamming are delighted to announce the wedding of their daughter GLENDALYNN to BRUCE ALLEN TEBBEN son of Calvin and Delores Tebben of Clara City, Minnesota. The ceremony will take place on Oct. 30, 1999, at 11 a.m. in Baldwin Street CRC, Jenison, Mich. Couples address: 7372 Boulder Bluff Dr. Jenison, MI 49428</p> <p>Anniversaries Truro, N.S. Whitby, Ont. 1959 Oct. 9 1999 "He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High will rest in the shadow of the Almighty." (Ps. 91:1) We praise and thank God for the fulfilment of this promise to our parents and grandparents, CLARENCE & DIANE ALKEMA (nee EISSES) as they celebrate 40 years of marriage. We are thankful for all the love and care they have so freely given to us. With love from your children and grandchildren: Andrew & Lia Alkema - Pugwash Junction, N.S. Jennifer, Patricia, Michelle Annette & Richard Griffioen - Lindsay, Ont. Ezra, Joseph, Adam Helena & Doug Rozema - Bowmanville, Ont. Joshua, Meagan, Emma, Daniel John-David Alkema - Chatham, Ont. Home address: 911 Lilac Terrace, Whitby, ON L1N 2A6</p> <p>1954 Oct. 15 1999 Renfrew Nepean Ont. Ont. With thankfulness to God, we celebrated the 45th wedding anniversary of our parents and grandparents, JOHN & GONNY OEGEMA (nee DEVRIES) We pray that God will continue to bless them and keep them in his care! Ellen & John Hessels Greg, Janice Bart & Lori Jen, Lesley-Anne John & Anneke Bart, Nicholas, Timothy, Alida Rick & Gam Brittany, Kristopher, Cory Peter Home address: 211 63rd Ave. W., Plantation Village, 200 Pineapple St., Bradenton, FL 34207</p>	<p>Dedemsvaart Brampton the Neth. Ont. Oct. 1, 1909 - Sept. 30, 1999 "You are my hiding place; you will protect me from trouble and surround me with songs of deliverance." (Psalm 32:7) On Sept. 30, 1999, our Lord called home our mother, grandmother and great-grandmother, LUTSKE BONTIUS (nee VAN DER VEEN) Loving wife of the late Johannes Bontius (1988). Much loved mother of: Gerry & Mary Bontius - Woodbridge, Ont. Ineke Groombridge - Port Coquitlam, B.C. Betty & Harold deHaan - Hamilton, Ont. Peter & Immy Bontius - Trenton, Ont. Margriet Hoogstad - Bolton, Ont. Joe & Pat Bontius - Palgrave, Ont. Trijntje Bontius + Hans & Tini Bontius - Rexdale, Ont. Tineke & Glen Ruppel - Oakville, Ont. Judith Bontius - Rexdale, Ont. Loving grandmother of 22 grandchildren and six great-grandchildren. Memorial service was held at Holland Christian Homes, Monday, Oct. 4, 1999.</p> <p>'s Gravenzande, Z.H. Brantford the Neth. Ont. "Casting all your care upon him, for he careth for you." (1 Peter 5:7) On Sept. 7, 1999, the Lord lovingly called home to himself, his servant CLARENCE (KLAAS) VAN STAALDUINEN Dearly loved husband of Metta (Verkade). Loving Dad of: Len & Paula Wilma Stuart & Liz Clarence & Tina Loved Opa of 11 grandchildren and four great-grandchildren. Predeceased by one grandson. Dear brother of: Matys Bets Nel Riet A memorial service was held at Hope Christian Reformed Church on Sept. 11, 1999, with Pastor Richard Giff officiating. Correspondence address: Metta van Staaldunin, 39 Beechwood Ave., Brantford, ON N3R 6E9.</p>	<p>Kerkwerwe Abbotsford the Neth. B.C. Dec. 2, 1907 - Oct. 2, 1999 "What is your only comfort in life and death? That I am not my own, but belong body and soul - in life and in death - to my faithful Savior Jesus Christ." Lord's Day 1 H.C. Our heavenly Father took unto himself his child, our beloved mother, grandmother and great-grandmother, NEELTJE CORNELIA BOOT (nee VAN DER WEKKEN) at the age of 91 years. Predeceased by her husband of 60 years, Antonie Boot, grandchild Robert Boot and son-in-law Mike Roche. Yoppa & Carl Bylenga - Abbotsford, B.C. Case & Aly Boot - Sioux Center, Iowa Jackie Roche - Delta, B.C. Jenny & Bert Op Den Dries - Chilliwack, B.C. Johnny & Sharon Boot - Cultus Lake, B.C. Corrie & Marius De Groot - Aldergrove, B.C. Helen & Bill Versluis - Lone Bute, B.C. Pete & Shirley Boot - Abbotsford, B.C. Nellie Boot - Cloverdale, B.C. Dan & Marilyn Boot - Victoria, B.C. Ann & Henk Oenema - Abbotsford, B.C. 38 grandchildren and 53 great-grandchildren The interment took place in Hazelwood Cemetery, Abbotsford, B.C. A memorial service was held at the First Christian Reformed Church in Abbotsford at 2 p.m. on Tuesday, Oct. 5, 1999. Rev. B. Slofstra officiated. Correspondence address: Mr. & Mrs. Carl Bylenga, 10-32777 Chilcotin Dr., Abbotsford, BC V2T 5W4</p> <p>Translated to glory, LUTINA WIELHOUWER - VANDORSTEN on Sunday, Oct. 3, 1999, in her 98th year. Left behind to mourn, but not without hope are her daughters, Audrey & Cees DeVoogd - Chatham, Ont. Kathleen Verburg - Samia, Ont. Lucille & Kenneth C. Sjaarda - Chatham, Ont. Jean & Dick Verbeek - Ridgeway, Ont. and her sons, Alex & Johanna (Vanderwel) - Chatham, Ont. Adrian & Gertie (Bax) - Owen Sound, Ont. Eli & Dorothy (VanRyn) - St. Thomas, Ont. Also 23 grandchildren with their spouses, and 56 great-grandchildren and one brother, Herman VanDorsten, in the Netherlands. Predeceased by her husband, Eliza (1974) son-in-law, Harry P. Verburg (1996) brother, Egbert VanDorsten sister, Femmegien Krale-Van Dorsten, in the Netherlands. Interment at Maple Leaf Cemetery, Chatham, Ont. took place Oct. 6, 1999, with the Rev. Paul Stadt officiating, meditating on Psalm 121. Correspondence address: Mrs. Audrey DeVoogd, 39 St. Anthony Street, Chatham, ON N7M 3X9</p>	<p>For Sale: Central Florida (near Cypress Gardens) two bedroom, two bathroom prefab. home (double width), comfortably and fully-furnished, sunroom, air-conditioned, adult park. Call 519-285-2904.</p> <p>Help Wanted Assistant grower/maintenance person required for a well-established, medium-sized greenhouse operation in the Niagara Region. Applicants should have some leadership qualities, experience in the horticultural industry, and be willing to look after the maintenance of the operation. Apply in writing by Nov. 12, 1999, to: Park Avenue Greenhouses Ltd. Attn.: Gordon VanGeest 376 Lake St. Grimsby, ON L3M 4M5 phone: 905-945-4748 fax: 905-945-0702</p> <p>The CRC Ministry to Seafarers in Montreal is in need on volunteers during November and December as well as the winter and spring months of 2000. For more information, call 1-514-844-1476, fax 1-514-844-1472 or send an e-mail to: seafarer@colba.net, attn. Karin.</p> <p>Teachers OTTAWA, Ont.: Redeemer Christian High School, located in the beautiful Ottawa-Carleton Region of Ontario, is inviting applications for a Grade 10 Art, a Grade 10 French and a French OAC teacher. The courses are to be taught as part of a maternity leave for second semester of this school year. We are willing to consider separate applications for the French and Art courses. Love for students, the subject matter and for Jesus Christ are essential. Applicants with the Ontario Teacher's Certificate and the Ontario Christian School Teacher's Certificate will be given preference but all applicants will be considered. Redeemer Christian High School is a member of the Ontario Alliance of Christian Schools and offers a high school program leading to the Ontario Secondary School Diploma and the Christian School Diploma. Please send letter of application, a resume, references and a current criminal records check to: The Principal Redeemer Christian High School 82 Colonnade Road N. Nepean, ON K2E 7L2</p> <p>SARNIA, Ont.: Lambton Christian School Society invites applications for a teaching position in Grade 7, starting Jan. 10, 2000, to the end of the school year. This could lead to a longer term. Please direct inquiries and resumes to: Mr. Pete Weening 1273 Exmouth Street Sarnia, ON N7S 1W9 phone: 519-383-7750 fax: 519-383-6304 e-mail: scs@tct.net</p>
<p>Anniversary Jarvis, Ont. Simcoe, Ont. 1959 Oct. 23 1999 In the spirit of thanksgiving, we announce the 40th wedding anniversary of our parents and grandparents, MARTIN O. & MARILYN DEVRIES - KLOET We, your children and grandchildren, thank God for you and pray that you will have many more years together. With much love to you, Mom & Dad, Opa & Oma: James, Matthew, Logan, Samantha - Simcoe O. Jeffrey - Toronto Jeanne & Tim Fisher - Waterloo Joel, Eric, Trent You are invited to an open house on Saturday, Oct. 23, 1999, from 1:30-3:30 p.m., Parkview Meadows, 72 Town Centre Dr., Townsend, Ont. Home address: 3 Kelly Ave., Simcoe, ON N3Y 4V6</p>		<p>Bed & Breakfast Bed & Brochje in Friesland en Groningen, Nederland! Uitstekende adressen. Call for information and flyers 519-842-5684. Fam. Stapensea, Tillsonburg, Ont.</p> <p>For Rent Mooi Franeker - Friesland, Nederland. Te huur voor vakantie ons gemeubileerd huis in Franeker. Gas, water, elektrisch bij de prijs inbegrepen. Supermarkt en restaurant op loopafstand. Franeker is een van de Friese 11 steden, met het wereldberoemde planetarium. Call 519-842-5684. Fam. Stapensea. Tillsonburg, Ont.</p>		

Classifieds

Obituaries

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the Neth. Ont.

March 24, 1926 - Oct. 6, 1999

The Lord in his covenant faithfulness called home after a short illness in her 74th year, our dear mother, grandmother and great-grandmother,

ALICE VIS
(nee EISING)

Predeceased by her husband Anthony J. Vis (1915-1990).

Dear mother and grandmother of:

Leo & Liz Vis - Smithville, Ont.

Lisa & Al Janssen, Lenn Vis,

Anthony Vis, Sharon Vis,

Jason Vis

Henny Medema - Kitchener, Ont.

Jeff Medema, Yvonne Medema &

Paul Carvalho, Danielle Medema,

Naomi Medema

Terry & Arnie Jagt - Rocky Mountain House, Alta.

Shirley & Dan Atwater, Tammy &

Mark Hare, Terri-anne & Rod

Loomis, Tanya & Kelly Moorey

Bob & Louise Vis - Langley, B.C.

Katie, Laura

Irene Van Brug & Dwayne Fink - Rocky Mountain House, Alta.

Alie Van Brug, George Van Brug,

Robert Letcher

And loving great-grandmother of 20 great grandchildren.

Sister and sister-in-law of Willem &

Reni Eising, John & Corrie Eising,

Jannes & Janzie Eising, Tryn (and the

late John) Nykamp, Henry & Leni

Eising, and many nieces and neph-

ews. And cousins in the Netherlands.

The funeral service was held at the

Rehoboth United Reformed Church of

Hamilton, worshipping at Cornerstone

Canadian Reformed Church on Tues-

day, Oct. 12, 1999, at 2 p.m. Rev.

Raymond Sikkema officiated.

Correspondence address: Leo Vis,

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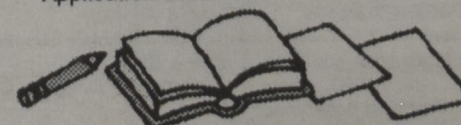
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Church News

Christian Reformed Church

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- ☐ Willing to take on additional responsibilities as H.C.H. expands.

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37 Brick Pond Lane
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Phone: (519) 539-2117



Our November 15, 1999, newspaper will explore the positives and negatives of fragrance. One of our articles in that issue will focus on the associations that our readers – young and old – have with certain smells. **That's why we're asking you to have a little fun with your nose (and your memory) by sharing some of your smell associations with us.**

☐ 10 and under ☐ 41-60
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☐ male
☐ female

mail: #4 -261 Martindale Rd
St. Catharines, ON L2W 1A1
fax: 905-682-8313

bacon	crayons
bleach	gasoline
bread	leather
cabbage	marigolds
cinnamon	smoke

Dordt College has a full time opening for the position of Director of Planning and Special Assistant to the President. Responsibilities of the position include directing institutional planning efforts, research and analysis of trends in Christian higher education, and overseeing special projects assigned by the President.

Candidates should possess a graduate degree, excellent oral and written communication skills, interpersonal skills which enhance team work, and be proficient in research and planning.

Qualified candidates with a personal commitment to a Reformed, biblical faith and the mission of Dordt College should forward a letter of application and resume to the Director of Human Resources. All applications must be received by December 1, 1999.

Fax 712-722-1198

Dordt College encourages applications from women minorities and persons with disabilities.

DORDT
COLLEGE

498 4th Avenue NE • Sioux Center, Iowa 51250 • 712-722-6000

Dordt College is seeking applications for openings beginning August 2000 in the following areas:

Two Modern Languages
Spanish

Education: Introduction, upper-level, and possibly graduate levels with emphasis on special education

Biology: Emphasis on human anatomy and/or molecular biology

Stage scenery, lighting, audio; management of auditorium

Theatre Arts: Costumer

Evaluation of applications will begin December 1 and continue until the positions are filled. To learn more about the position and receive application materials, qualified persons committed to a Reformed, biblical perspective and educational philosophy are encouraged to send a letter of interest that provides evidence of that commitment and a curriculum vitae to Dr. Rockne McCarthy; Dordt College; 498 4th Ave NE; Sioux Center, IA 51250-1697; facsimile: 712 722-4496; e-mail: vpaa@dordt.edu; Web site: www.dordt.edu/offices/acadaft/

Dordt College encourages the nominations and candidacies of women, minorities, and persons with disabilities.

DORDT COLLEGE

498 4th Avenue NE

Sioux Center, Iowa 51250-1697

Classifieds



SMITHVILLE DISTRICT CHRISTIAN HIGH SCHOOL

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Part Time Science Teacher

Due to unforeseen circumstances we are in need of a **part time science teacher** [2/3 of full time] for the current and the spring semester. Courses to be taught are Grade 12 physics, OAC biology this semester and Grade 11 chemistry and OAC biology in the spring.

If interested,
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Marc Stroboscher at
phone: 905-957-3255
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CALVIN COLLEGE

REGISTRAR

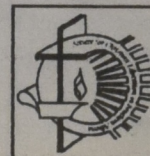
Calvin College seeks applicants for the position of Registrar. The Registrar is accountable for providing the College community with effective registration and enrollment procedures; academic accounting and record keeping; an academic advising program; and information and advice for institutional planning and policy development.

Calvin College is a Christian college in the Reformed tradition. The candidate must embrace the Reformed tradition of the Christian faith and energetically support the mission of Calvin College. The successful candidate must have a Masters degree; five to ten years related experience or equivalent combination of education and experience; strong organizational, communication and management skills; knowledge of computers and related software. The position has faculty status.

Candidates should submit a resume, including the names and telephone numbers of three references by November 1, 1999, to:

Connie Bellows,
Director of Human Resources
Calvin College
3201 Burton SE
Grand Rapids MI 49546
or send to belloc@calvin.edu

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Immanuel Christian High School On sunny Lethbridge, Alberta PRINCIPAL

We are seeking a leader with a commitment to Jesus Christ for an interdenominational 7-12 school with an enrolment of over 300 students, beginning September 2000.

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Mrs. Grace Holstrop
P.O. Box 116
Diamond City, AB
T0K 0T0

phone: 403-328-6995
or e-mail:

Principal Search Committee
eddehaan@hotmail.com



CALVIN COLLEGE

DEAN OF RESEARCH AND SCHOLARSHIP

Calvin College seeks applicants for the position of Dean of Research and Scholarship. The Dean is responsible for planning, promotion, and oversight of programs and policies related to faculty and student research, including external and internal funding, centers and institutes, endowed chairs, sabbaticals, Calvin Research Fellowships, and Summer Seminars. The Dean also initiates new programs in support of scholarship at the college and promotes Calvin's leadership in Christian witness throughout the wider academic arena.

Calvin College is a Christian college in the Reformed tradition. The candidate must embrace the Reformed tradition of the Christian faith and energetically support the mission of Calvin College. The candidate will have the vision and program-building energy necessary for development work, plus a substantial personal record of scholarship. The successful candidate must have a Doctoral degree, significant academic and administrative experience, and the ability to articulate the college mission for Reformed Christian higher education.

Candidates should submit a curriculum vitae, including the names and telephone numbers of three references by November 10, 1999 to:

Connie Bellows,
Director of Human Resources
Calvin College
3201 Burton SE
Grand Rapids MI 49545
or send to
belloc@calvin.edu

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REDEEMER A CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY COLLEGE

Vice-President (Academic)

Applications are invited for this renewable five-year appointment which begins July 1, 2000.

As the chief academic officer of the college, this person reports to the President and is responsible for the faculty, academic program, library and research centres of this vibrant undergraduate institution.

Candidates should have appropriate scholarly and administrative experience and be able to provide academic leadership which demonstrates a commitment to the reformed Christian basis of the college.

Applications should include a curriculum vitae, a two or three page statement outlining a vision for reformed Christian liberal arts and science university education, and three references. Applications should be submitted no later than Nov. 30, 1999 to:

Dr. Justin D. Cooper, President
777 Garner Road E., Ancaster, ON L9K 1J4
Tel: (905) 648-2131, Fax: (905) 648-2134
cooper@redeemer.on.ca

In accordance with Canadian immigration requirements, this advertisement is directed to Canadian citizens and permanent residents.

Events/Classifieds

Calendar of Events

- Oct. 23 Back to God Hour Rally in the chapel at Holland Homes, **Brampton**, Ont. at 7 p.m., featuring Rev. David Feddes, and Dr. John Vander Tuin on the organ. (#)
- Oct. 23 "Men of Praise" Male Chorus (John Oosterink, director) in concert. Also participating: the "Clarkson CRC Choir" (Laurens Kaldeway, director). Clarkson Christian Reformed Church, 1880 Lakeshore Rd. W., **Mississauga**, Ont. 7:30 p.m. Freewill offering. For info call: 416-245-3940.
- Oct. 23 Montana from Twente in concert with Collegium Musicum in Maranatha CRC, Scott St., **St. Catharines**, Ont., 8 p.m., \$5 admission. (#)
- Oct. 26 Montana from Twente in concert- Reformed Church, Speedvale Ave., **Guelph**, Ont., 7:30 p.m., \$5 admission.
- Oct. 27 Montana from Twente in concert with the Ambassadors in the **Ancaster**, Ont. CRC, 8 p.m., \$5 admission.
- Oct. 28 Montana from Twente in concert in Holland Christian Homes, **Brampton**, Ont. 7:30 p.m., \$5 admission.
- Oct. 28 The Fifth Annual Kuyper Lecture, Economic Stewardship in a Global Context, by Dr. Bob Goudzwaard. 7:30 p.m. West Commons, Dordt College, **Sioux Center**, Iowa. Free. For more info, call 712-722-6333.
- Oct. 30 Giant Bazaar at Trinity Christian School, 650 Walkers Line, **Burlington**, Ont., 10 a.m. - 4 p.m., followed by an auction at 6:30 p.m.
- Oct. 30 Annual York Music Fest, 7:30 p.m., featuring the Ambassadors Male Choir, Laura Pin, Pianist, Dr. John van der Tuin, Organist, and the Goheens, Youth String Quartet, at the Maranatha CRC, **York**, Ont. For ticket information, call Louis Andela at 905-765-6124 or Marilyn Miedema at 905-765-4244.
- Oct. 30 Special Music Evening: Partners International invites you to the Special Rally directed by Mr. Leendert Kooij with the choir and brass of the "Ontario Christian Music Assembly," Andre Knevel on the organ and the Kooij sisters. Free admission with a special offering for Partners International. 8 p.m. at St. George's Anglican Church, **Guelph**, Ont. Plan to attend this unique evening.
- Oct. 31 Dutch Service, Ancaster CRC, Hwy. 53, **Ancaster**, Ont., 3 p.m., Rev. Jerry Hoytema. (#)
- Nov. 5 Christian Festival Concert under the direction of Leendert Kooij, at Roy Thomson Hall, **Toronto**, Ont. Tickets are \$25/\$20/\$15. Call 416-636-9779. (#)
- Nov. 19 Concert of Praise introducing the new organ at Maranatha CRC, **Cambridge**, Ont. by organist Dr. John van der Tuin, 7:30 p.m. Adults \$10, Students & Seniors \$8, Family rate \$20.
- Nov. 19-21 50th Anniversary Celebrations, **Clinton**, Ont. CRC. For more info and to reserve dinner tickets, contact Jennie at 519-482-9827, or Dick at 519-482-3431.
- Nov. 27-28 50th Anniversary of Immanuel CRC, **Brampton**, Ont. Dinner, Festivities, and Commemorative Service. Contact Shirley Aukema at 905-453-4487 for more info. (#)



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Immanuel CRC, Brampton, Ontario

50th Anniversary CelebrationWe invite all friends and former members to join us for
Dinner and Festivities

on Saturday, November 27, 1999

and for a

Commemorative Service

on Sunday, November 28, 1999.

For more information and dinner reservations
contact Shirley Aukema at 905-453-4487.

CALVIN COLLEGE

DEAN FOR INSTRUCTION

Calvin College seeks applicants for the position of Dean for Instruction. The Dean is responsible, under the direction of the Provost and in collaboration with the academic deans, for oversight of programs and policies that are directed toward effective teaching and student learning. This position shares with the academic deans the administrative responsibility for achieving educational goals expressed in *An Expanded Statement of the Mission of Calvin College*.

Calvin College is a Christian college in the Reformed tradition. The candidate must embrace the Reformed tradition of the Christian faith and energetically support the mission of Calvin College. The successful candidate must hold a Doctoral degree in Education, Psychology or related area with special expertise in the fields of teaching and learning.

Candidates should submit a *curriculum vitae*, including the names and telephone numbers of three references by November 1, 1999 to:

Connie Bellows,
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Admission at each concert: \$5 at the door

Sat. Oct. 23, 8:00 p.m.
with Collegium Musicum in
Maranatha CRC, Scott
St., St. Catharines

Tue. Oct. 26, 7:30 p.m. in
the Ref. Church of
Guelph, Speedvale Ave.

Wed. Oct. 27, 8:00 p.m.
with the Ambassadors in
the Ancaster CRC

Thur. Oct. 28, 7:30 p.m.
in Holland Christian
Homes, Brampton

Calvin College

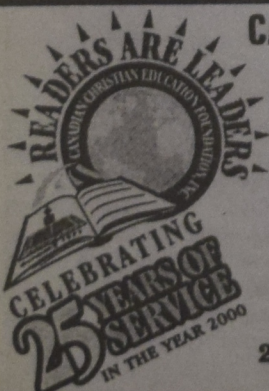
has recently instituted a new venture

The Beversluis Forum

Named in honour of the late Dr. N. H. Beversluis, the Forum will facilitate lectures, symposia and publications which foster discussion of the Reformed vision of education at the K-12 level.

Dr. Nicolas Wolterstorff

will deliver the inaugural lecture

in the Commons Annex Lecture Hall at Calvin College
on November 12, 1999, at 3:30 p.m.For details contact Clarence Joldersma at 616-957-6596 or
cjolders@calvin.edu

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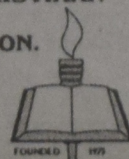
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News

Empty-nesters bike Lake Huron



John Vander Steen and John de Vries Jr. take a breather from their bike trip and enjoy the scenery around Lake Huron.

John Vander Steen and John de Vries Jr.

John de Vries is a chaplaincy co-ordinator in Ontario, and John Vander Steen teaches electronics at Fanshawe college in London, Ontario. The de Vrieses have three grown sons, the Vander Steens two adult daughters and a son. So this was a time in their lives when it would be relatively easy for these men in their late 50s to plan a two-week trip – with the approval of their spouses.

The around-Lake-Huron-bike-trip was conceived during a November Saturday morning breakfast conversation, planned during the next spring and biked over 13 days this past August.

The two-person 1,650 kilometre trip began from London, Ontario, would wind through Holmesville, Sauble Beach, Tobermory, Manitoulin Island, Espanola, Blind River, Sault Ste. Marie, into Michigan through

Mackinaw City, Roger City, Frankenmuth, and Port Huron, and back into Ontario, and home to London.

It was a unique opportunity to enjoy the hospitality of residents of these places who welcomed us, fed us (Homesville; Manitoulin; 40 Mile Road Lighthouse), offered to dry our clothes (Espanola), volunteered to do our bike maintenance (a Sault Ste. Marie garage), guided us to the best unofficial camping spots and beaches (10 different locations enroute).



The trip began on a sunny Saturday which was quickly followed by rain, hail and many overcast

days in northern Ontario and Michigan. Locals guided us to the best places to pitch our tent: secluded beaches, a lighthouse hamlet, a picnic spot, an abandoned

church cemetery, a new bridge site, Gramp's lawn, a lake-front lawn, and the Lorenz Lutheran Conference grounds in Frankenmuth, Michigan.

With our single-person-tents, sleeping bags, clothes, a spoon each, one small pocketknife, flashlights and personal necessities on our bikes, our home could be wherever nature offered beauty and privacy. We always camped with permission and it was our motto to leave the site cleaner than we found it.

Biking began with the break of day after eating a boiled egg and a granola bar. Some days were shorter, to provide time to be tourists. At times we stopped to replenish our water supply, buy apples, bananas, yogurts and bagels to supplement our supply of power bars. For supper it was often soup, with pork and beans heated on a powerful little gas burner.

Along the way we discovered roadside apple trees and unharvested little potatoes. The lighthouse keeper supplied us with his garden delights – more tomatoes, lettuce, beans and zucchini than we could eat or carry.

What a display of lightning flashes and thunder claps by the St. Joseph's Island bridge 50 kilometres from the Sault! How welcome was the Sault Ste. Marie Day's Inn (a complimentary lodging) after 50 kilometres of biking in rain and hail. By the Mackinaw Bridge in Michigan a policewoman got a truck for us which would transport our bikes across the bridge. At the Samia/Port Huron Bluewater



Bridge we had to be transported, but weren't charged any toll.

The cell phone in our saddle bag helped us connect with our wives, who met us at Frankenmuth for an excellent Zehnder's chicken dinner and a day of rest as tourists in this "German/Bavarian city."

The food, the stops, the biking distances and everything else were arranged as we biked. Fortunately, our personal chemistries clicked: our wishes and energies meshed. After a while we began to spontaneously alter taking the bicycling lead and "breaking wind" – which seemed almost always against us!

Another rich source of happy memories was the other bikers we met: the self-declared "snivel servants" from Victoria, B.C.; Robin from Montreal; the retired couple who were looking to get a truck ride because Highway 17 was just too narrow for them to bike safely; the young couple from Los Angeles biking to Boston; and many others as well.

Besides some inconvenient rain, hail and wind, there was one flat tire and one spill on the soft shoulder of Hwy 17. It was upsetting, but, thankfully, there were no broken bones. This helped us appreciate the Michigan highways with their widely paved shoulders for biker use and safety.

As we reflect now that we are home, our trip seemed a truly spiritual experience: of the beauty of nature, the friendliness and hospitality of people and the camaraderie enjoyed as fellow travellers. Our lives have been enriched because of it.

News Digest

Comfortable in jail

INDEPENDENCE, Iowa (EP) — Four Amish inmates convicted of vandalizing a neighbor's farm were released early, in part because officials believed jail life was more comfortable than the austere Amish lifestyle. "I thought we better get them out of here because they were getting too used to it," said Buchanan County jail administrator Russell West.

"I think we were ruining them here. The TV, the electric light, telephone and running water – I think they were starting to like it here." The four Amish young people pleaded guilty to third-degree criminal mischief for vandalizing buildings and equipment at a neighbor's farm, apparently because they believed the neighbor had told authorities about an under-age drinking party.

A prison beauty contest

LIMA, Peru (AP) — Recently in Lima, elegantly dressed women took part in a televised gala beauty contest, watched by an audience including government officials, talk show hosts, fashion designers ... and prison guards. The beauty contest was held at the Santa Monica Women's Prison in the Peruvian capital, and featured Americans and other foreigners doing time for drug convictions. This year's winner was Nicole Bos, an 18-year-old Dutch citizen and drug smuggler.

The contest, which started six years ago, has been transformed by the Peruvian government into a gala event to showcase the humane treatment at the women's prison. But contestants were well aware that the glamor was short-lived. "It sure makes you depressed afterward," said Sandra Tappeiner, a 26-year-old German contestant. "It stops abruptly and you realize you're in prison."

Abuser sentenced to marriage

CINCINNATI, Ohio (Reuters) — An Ohio judge has sentenced a man accused of domestic violence to marry the woman he allegedly attacked. "I believe the bonds of marriage might make an abuser think a little bit more before resorting to physical force," said Judge Albert Mestemaker. The judge said he believes domestic violence is less likely to occur between married couples than between unmarried couples living together.

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